THE MEDIATOR

Geiermann

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Sacred Heart Retreat
Louisville
Ky

Mar 1930.

WITHDRAWN

THE MEDIATOR

JESUS CHRIST IN THE SCRIPTURES
THE MODEL OF THE PRIEST

BY
REV. PETER GEIERMANN, C. SS. R.

"There is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus." I. Tim. 2, 5.

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APPROBATION

By virtue of the faculties granted to me by Most Rev. P. Murray, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby permit the publication of the work entitled "The Mediator," by the Rev. Peter Geiermann, C. Ss. R., after having had the work examined, according to our Constitution, by two theologians.

Thos. P. Brown, C. Ss. R.
Provincial Superior

St. Louis, Mo.,
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Dedicated

with filial piety to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the Mother of Our Mediator, in the golden jubilee year of the restoration of her Miraculous Image, with the humble supplication that by her perpetual help she will aid all priests to become true Mediators between God and man.

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INTRODUCTION.

The nature of the Priesthood is such that neither clergy nor laily can have too high an opinion of it. The Priest is said to be "Another Christ," and a calling with such a title must of necessity be sublime. There are classics in English on the Priesthood in which it might be thought the matter was exhausted. But the Author has viewed it in a new light, and by emphasizing the mediatorial character of the Priest, has brought out many fresh points and given splendid suggestions. Priests like other people dislike being preached at and patronized. There is a notable absence of this bad quality in this work. For by studying Jesus Christ portrayed in the Scriptures as the divine Model of the Priest the Author speaks as brother to brother and friend to friend. He has conferred a lasting benefit upon the English clergy by analyzing the qualities of the Mediator and interpreting the principles of His conduct for them.

PETER C. YORKE.

PREFACE.

The written word and the Incarnate Word of God exercise a fascination over the human mind and heart. In the first God manifests His fatherly love for His children on earth in human words; in the second He has permanently united His nature to our own and given us His only begotten Son as our Redeemer and spiritual Guide.

To the Apostles, who were privileged to live with the divine Savior, His words "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also," had a comprehensive meaning. No doubt we all wish at times that we too were privileged to learn the spiritual life from this good Master Himself. Still, He has not left us orphans, for He abides with us in spirit and in truth in the Sacrament of His love, and exercises His influence in our behalf both on earth and in heaven.

In the written word of God the Incarnate Word of God has left us a faithful portrayal of His own human life to serve as a Model for all who wish to follow Him. This Model is bequeathed in a special manner to those whom His grace calls to be Mediators between God and man, for they are the instruments by which He continues the work of salvation and sanctification to the end of time.

THE MEDIATOR presents Jesus Christ as represented in the Sacred Scriptures to be the Model of His Priests. It begins with a general view of the priest's office as mediator, then pre-

sents those qualities of the Master in detail which make the priest a mediator acceptable to God, and to man, and continues by explaining the conduct of the divine Model while mediating in the name of man, and in the name of God. By referring again to the divine Model it explains the means which the mediator should use for his personal sanctification, and encourages him by pointing out the reward awaiting all who are faithful mediators through Jesus Christ.

May *the Mediator* assist many mediators of Christ to become conformable to their divine Model, that they may reap a rich harvest of souls and have Him for the measure of their eternal reward.

St. Alphonsus Church, Fresno, Cal.,

Aug. 15, 1916. The Author.

THE MEDIATOR IN GENERAL.

Jesus Christ.

Our heavenly Father took compassion on us when His plan for our salvation was frustrated by original sin. In His search for a mediator to reconcile us to Him He looked in vain among the angels of heaven and the children of men. The former, though His friends, could not satisfy the infinite justice of God outraged by sin. The latter, besides being helpless, were disqualified as the interested parties who had wantonly rebelled against Him. And so it was decreed in the merciful council of the Almighty that the Mediator between God and man should be *divine,* to satisfy for the malice of sin by His infinite merits, and *human,* to restore man to the friendship of God by His personal sacrifice.

Thus the Son of God qualified as Mediator between God and man. Addressing His heavenly Father He said: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not: but a body Thou hast fitted to Me: Holocausts for sin did not please Thee." Then said I: "Behold I come: that I should do Thy will, O God."[1] And the Father replied: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of justice is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved justice, and hated iniquity: therefore, God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."[2]

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[1]Hebr. 10, 5-6. [2]Hebr. 1, 8-9.

And thus "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,"[3] through whom it hath well pleased the Father "to reconcile all things unto Himself, making peace through the blood of His cross, both as to the things that are on earth, and the things that are in heaven."[4] "Being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man, and in habit found as man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."[5]

The Priest.

Desirous of continuing as Mediator on earth after His ascension into heaven, Jesus Christ clothes His priests with His own divine authority and power. As the new head of the human race He commissions them to pray and to offer a clean oblation "from the rising of the sun even to the going down"[6] to the heavenly Father by continuing the august sacrifice of Calvary in an unbloody manner to the end of time. This is My Body—This is My Blood. "Do this for a commemoration of Me."[7] And in virtue of His divine nature and commission He empowers them to act in the name

[3]John 1, 14. [4]Coloss. 1, 20. [5]Phil. 2, 6-11.
[6]Mal. 1, 11. [7]Luke 22, 19.

of God in dealing with mankind. "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."[8] "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me."[9] "And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."[10] "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."[11]

When contemplating the sublime prerogatives of this "man of God"[12] St. Alphonsus searched the testimony of ages for words to express the dignity of his office. With St. Ignatius, martyr, he calls the priesthood "the apex of dignities," with St. Ephraim "an infinite dignity," and with St. John Chrysostom "a heavenly dignity." With St. Denis he called the priest "a divine man," placed as Innocent III says "between God and man; inferior to God but superior to man." "Let it suffice for us to know," concludes the saint, "that Jesus Christ identifies Himself with His priests, for to them He said: 'He that heareth you heareth Me.' "

The office of the priest is to give adequate honor to God and to bring peace to men of good will. In the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass he honors the heavenly Father through His divine Son, and thus

[8]Matt. 28, 18-20. [9]Luke 10, 16-17. [10]Matt. 18, 17.
[11]John 20, 22-23. [12]I. Tim. 6, 11.

gives God greater honor than the angels and saints can render Him. And by the recitation of the Canonical Hours he unites the Church militant on earth with the Church triumphant in heaven in a prayer of praise and supplication that ascends as sweet incense before the throne of God. As the Ambassador of Christ he brings the faithful a message from heaven, unlocks the fountains of grace to them in the administration of the Sacraments, enables them to share in the satisfaction of Christ by means of indulgences, and shares the prayers of mother Church with them by imparting to them her liturgical blessings.

The power of this mediator between God and from heaven at his word, the demons of hell are put to flight by his command, and through his ministry the children of men become children of God, are washed in the blood of the Lamb, fed with the living Bread that came down from heaven, and sent with divine certainty to the enjoyment of eternal bliss.

Being morally one with Jesus Christ in His office as Mediator, "there is nothing more excellent in the world" remarks St. Ambrose, "than the power of the priest." It transcends, as St. Bernard says, "all the dignities of kings and emperors and even of the angels themselves." "Princes may bind the body," says St. John Chrysostom, "but the priest can free the soul." "Angels may be present," remarks St. Peter Damian, "but they wait for the priest to exercise his power." In man is so great that even the Son of God descends the opinion of St. Alphonsus "the power of the

priest surpasses even that of the Blessed Virgin herself, for, though she is all-powerful by her intercession, she cannot forgive sin." We may go still farther and say that though Mary by her "fiat" permitted the Son of God to become man, the priest becomes, as it were, the creator of his Creator by pronouncing the words of consecration in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required."[13] In constituting him their Mediator through Jesus Christ both God and His Church have given the priest all the honor, authority, and power that a creature can receive. What then do they require of him in return? "To live in the midst of the world without wishing its pleasures; to be a member of every family yet belonging to none; to share all sufferings; to penetrate all secrets; to heal all wounds; to go from men to God and offer Him their Sacrifice and prayers; to return from God to man and bring pardon and hope; to have a heart of fire for charity and a heart of bronze for chastity; always to teach and pardon, always to console and bless.—My God, what a life! and it is yours, O priest of Jesus Christ."[14]

To live this life of charity and self-immolation priests must make the exhortation addressed to them at their ordination—"Conform your lives to the mysteries you perform"—the rule of their daily conduct. They effect this conformity, and qualify as worthy Mediators between God and man, by practising the virtues which adorned the

[13] Luke 12, 48. [14] Lacordaire.

human life of their divine Model while on earth. In proportion as a priest learns these from Jesus Christ does he literally become an "Alter Christus," and may truly say with St. Paul: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me."[15]

[15]Gal. 2, 20.

I.

QUALITIES THAT RENDER MAN'S MEDIATOR ACCEPTABLE TO GOD.

1. HUMILITY.

Jesus Christ.

Because "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble,"[1] the Son of God humbled Himself exceedingly when He came to mediate between God and man. He "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant."[2] He humbled His divinity by permanently clothing it in human flesh that thus He might forever reconcile God and man. "Who ever heard of a man taking compassion on a sick worm in such a way," asks St. Alphonsus in contemplating the compassion of the Son of God for us, "that he might restore it to vigor with his own heart's blood?" And yet this is how the Son of God lowered Himself for love of mankind. For by the mouth of the Royal Prophet He graphically described His humiliation in advance when He said: "I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people."[3]

Not content in merely becoming man, the Son of God appeared under such humble circumstances that He was not recognized or welcomed by mankind. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."[4] Instead of taking up His abode in a prominent place where He might attract the attention of men, Jesus Christ went down to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph "and was subject to them,"[5] as though He were the lowliest of the

[1]Jas. 4, 6. [2]Phil. 2, 7. [3]Ps. 21, 7.
[4]John 1, 11. [5]Luke 2, 51.

children of men. In these few words the Evangelist sums up the hidden life of our Lord, apparently resting assured that he had recorded everything worthy of mention when he stated that Jesus Christ lived an humble life before God and men.

And with what humility of mind and heart did He enter on His public mission! Instead of immediately answering those who came to Him in search of the Messias, "I am He,"[6] Jesus meekly said: "Come and see."[7] Unlike Peter, who obstinately relied on his own strength, Jesus, though God, was humbly guided by His heavenly Father. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, the Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doth, these the Son also doth in like manner."[8] Steadfast in this guidance, He was not unduly elated by the cry of "Hosanna to the son of David,"[9] from His friends, nor unduly dejected by the cry of "Crucify Him, crucify Him"[10] from His enemies.

Though He was the Incarnate Wisdom, Jesus frequently turned to His heavenly Father for guidance, and at times "passed the whole night in prayer."[11] He steadfastly pursued the plan outlined for Him by His heavenly Father, saying: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work."[12] But when the disciples wished to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans because they refused to receive Him, He chided them gently saying: "You

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[6]John 18, 6. [7]John 1, 39. [8]John 5, 19.
[9]Matt. 21, 9. [10]John 19, 6. [11]Luke 6, 12.
[12]John 4, 34.

know not of what spirit you are."[13] And when Peter in his blind zeal tried to prevent Jesus from undergoing the suffering and death ordained for Him by His heavenly Father, He turned to Peter and said to him: "Go behind me, Satan, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but that are of men."[14] In fact, the very hatred of His enemies seemed to spur Jesus to fulfil the will of God in their behalf and to convert them from the error of their ways. "I am come to cast fire on the earth:" He said, "and what will I, but that it be kindled? And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?"[15]

Our Savior exercised no studied reserve, neither did He manifest a dignified condescension in His dealings with mankind. His "delights were to be with the children of men,"[16] and it was evident to any one that observed Him even casually that He was entirely at home with all of them and they with Him. How much He must have endured from the ignorance and rudeness of His disciples, and yet He treated them with the unvarying kindness and affection of an elder brother. How much had He to endure from the duplicity and malice of His countrymen, and still His only complaint was one of pathetic devotion. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem" He exclaimed "thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not."[17]

[13]Luke 9, 55. [14]Mark 8, 33. [15]Luke 12, 49-50.
[16]Prov. 8, 31. [17]Matt. 23, 37.

As far as was consistent with His ministry Jesus shunned the applause of men. When the people wished to make Him king after He had miraculously fed them in the desert, He quietly withdrew from their midst and retired into the mountain to pray.[18] To the disciples who had witnessed His transfiguration He said: "Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead."[19] And as often as He cured an unfortunate in private He invariably enjoined secrecy on him, saying: "See thou tell no man."[20] But when the glory of God or the welfare of souls was at stake He fearlessly drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, saying: "My house is the house of prayer. But you have made it a den of thieves,"[21] and denounced the Pharisees without any human consideration. "You serpents," He said, "generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell?"[22]

Jesus Christ realized both the sanctity of His person and the divinity of His mission, and yet "He opened not His mouth" when He was reviled and calumniated, but was "dumb as a lamb before his shearer"[23] when His executioners subjected Him to the most inhuman tortures and dragged Him to death. In fact, He gloried in being "the outcast of the people."[24] "For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names,"[25] so that He can turn with great confidence to the priests of His Church and invite them to learn from Him

[18]Matt. 14, 23. [19]Matt. 17, 9. [20]Matt. 8, 4.
[21]Luke 19, 46. [22]Matt. 23, 33. [23]Is. 53, 7.
[24]Ps. 21, 7. [25]Phil. 2, 9.

how to become acceptable mediators in the sight of God. "Learn of Me," He says, "because I am meek, and humble of heart."[26]

The Priest.

In qualifying as the Mediator of mankind before the throne of His heavenly Father the Son of God laid aside His divine dignity and consecrated His human life unreservedly to His office. The most that His priests can do to become acceptable to God, as they have no dignity of their own to renounce, is to surrender themselves in all humility to the dignity that is conferred upon them through Jesus Christ, strive to become worthy instruments in His hands to promote the glory of God and the sanctification of souls, and acknowledge that they are "unprofitable servants"[27] if by the influence of grace they have been faithful to their office. Humility, then, is the first requisite for the priest to qualify as man's mediator with God. For the ordinary Christian humility is the bed-rock on which his faith, the foundation of the spiritual life, must rest; but for the priest humility must also be the corner-stone of his sacred ministry. This truth is emphasized by all the saints. For example, St. Augustine says, "The highest honor should be united with the greatest humility;" St. Bernard writes, "The higher one is placed, the humbler one should be;" and St. Alphonsus teaches that "The more exalted the dignity of the priest, the greater should be his humility." And before they wrote our

[26]Matt. 11, 29. [27]Luke 17, 10.

Savior had insisted on the same thing when He said to His disciples: "He that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is the leader, as he that serveth."[28]

According to her own testimony our blessed Lady was acceptable to God and chosen to become the Mother of our Savior because of her profound humility. "My soul doth magnify the Lord," she said, "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid."[29] How she must have blushed at her unworthiness when she learned that she was the one blessed among women to bring the Son of God into the world! And if the dignity of the priest surpasses in some respects even that of the Mother of God, can he be more than a mere functionary without humility? Indeed, he can find favor with the Lord only in so far as he clothes himself with the humility of Jesus Christ in whose name he is called to mediate between God and man.

It is far more necessary to pray for humility and to practise it than to understand the theory of it. Still a summary of what the saints have taught of the theory of humility is both interesting and instructive. They speak of humility partly as a grace and partly as a virtue. As a virtue it is so fundamental in its nature, and so varied in its application, that none of the early Fathers of the Church have attempted to define it. From among the definitions given at a later date that

[28]Luke 22, 26. [29]Luke 1, 46-48.

of Cajetan, in his commentary on St. Thomas, may be selected as the clearest. He defines humility as "the subjugation of whatever is of one's self to whatever is of God." Another writer of repute defines it as "the virtue by which man holds himself in that nothingness, which he is of himself, and refuses to be moved from it by any external thing." Thus, Abraham made an act of humility when he said: "I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes."[30] And St. Francis of Assisi bequeathed the world another sublime example of humility in his saying: "Who art Thou, O Lord, and who am I? I am what I am in Thy sight, and I am nothing more."

When considered subjectively humility is in the mind as the light and law of a virtue infused by God. It is in the will as an inclination of grace to follow this light and to be guided by this law. It subjects the mind of the believer to the particular truths of revelation and to God, the Author of truth. It enables him to deliberate with right reason, and to judge himself as he truly is in the sight of God—nothing but sinfulness of himself, and all else by the favor of God. Humility is in the will of the believer when he conforms his will, the desires of his heart, and even his external actions, to the holy will of God.

St. Peter gave an example of humility when he considered himself unworthy of beholding the miracles of our Lord, and cried out as he prostrated himself before his Master: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."[31] The Canaanite woman

[30]Gen. 18, 27. [31]Luke, 5, 8.

manifested the same humility, when she took the place our Lord assigned to her, and answered: "Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters."[32] In the same spirit the Roman Centurion declared himself unworthy that the Lord should enter under his roof, and the publican in the temple prayed: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner."[33]

When considered objectively humility is an acknowledgment of God's infinite perfection, and of man's absolute dependence on Him. As such it is a necessary condition for the practice of every Christian virtue. It is indispensable for the priest if he is to appear in the proper dispositions before the throne of God as the mediator for his fellowmen. To be acceptable to God as a mediator for man, the priest must above all be at peace with Him. But if he appeared at the altar in mortal sin, he would have grave reason to fear that God might strike him dead as He struck Oza, who irreverently touched the Ark of the Covenant.[34] To safeguard the reverence due Him God addresses a word of warning to every one that enters His presence. "Before prayer prepare thy soul:" He says, "and be not as a man that tempteth God."[35] Might He then not utter the woes which Jesus pronounced against the Pharisees, upon that priest who would appear before God devoid of humility, and rashly attempt to mediate in behalf of the people?

When considered practically humility has a neg-

[32]Matt. 15, 27. [33]Luke 18, 13. [34]II. Kings, 6, 6.
[35]Eccli. 18, 23.

ative and a positive side. The negative side consists in that self-renunciation which St. Thomas defines as "the virtue which tempers and withholds the soul from tending immoderately towards high things."[36] The positive side is the subjugation of the soul to God. Both negative and positive parts unite in every act of humility, for the end of self-renunciation is always to subjugate the soul to God. As the practice of humility is the proximate disposition for the reception of that grace which is necessary to exercise the infused virtues, the priest must be very humble to practise the virtues required of him as mediator between God and man. For this reason the words of the Wise Man, "The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things, and thou shalt find grace before God,"[37] apply to him in a special manner.

Spiritual writers enumerate the reasons that should prompt every Christian to practise humility. God is infinite perfection. Man is indebted to Him for creation, reason, faith, vocation, and preservation. He is personally dependent on the providence of God for a continuance in existence, on the mercy of God for the forgiveness of his sins, and on the guidance of God's grace in his ignorance, weakness and concupiscence, as well as in the perils and hidden snares which Satan will prepare for him. Man has still a long way to travel in this vale of tears, and can protect himself against the evils of pride only by the practice of humility.

[36]St. Thomas Sum. II. II. q. 160, a. 1. [37]Eccli. 3, 20.

As much is required of the priest he must lay the foundation of success in the ministry well by the practice of humility. Humility is necessary for him in the devout celebration of holy Mass, and in the conscientious discharge of the other duties of his office. It is also necessary for him to obtain God's blessing on his apostolic labors, and to enable him to make reparation to God for the sins of his people. Humility enables the priest to find rest for his soul by uniting him to Jesus Christ during life. It also fortifies him for the moment of death, when he must render a strict account of his stewardship to his divine Master.

There are three degrees of humility. They correspond to the three degrees of the spiritual life. The first requires as much renunciation of self and surrender to God as is necessary to avoid mortal sin. The second degree demands as much fidelity to grace as is necessary to avoid venial sin. While the third degree overcomes even human defects by subjecting all that is of self in man to all that is of God. When a soul has attained this degree it may truthfully say with St. Paul: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me."[38]

There are two circumstances about the life of a priest that ought to determine him to pay particular attention to the practice of humility. The first is the fact that after he has left the seminary he will rarely have any one to warn him of danger, or to call his attention to his faults. The other is the circumstance that, in the faithful discharge

[38]Gal. 2, 20.

of his duties, the very nature of his office exposes the priest to many temptations against humility, to which the ordinary Christian is not exposed. If, then, he has no charitable brother priest near to warn him in time of danger, he may, if he is not ever solicitous, suffer spiritual shipwreck for lack of humility, as others have done before him.

Humility without genuine lowliness of spirit is only the professional humility of the Pharisee. When a priest is actuated by this he is apt to be pompous, harsh, and severe in the ministry. He will be formal with God, insincere with his superiors, condescending and vindictive with his brother priests, and tyrannical with his parishioners. He finds the religious training of the children as far beneath him as hearing confessions and visiting the sick is distasteful. The proud priest is more interested in his external appearance than in the condition of his conscience. He is more concerned about the comforts of home than in the spiritual condition of his parish. He has always time for social affairs, but none for the preparation of a sermon. His name appears frequently in the papers, but God will have to visit him with severe humiliations before He can record his name in the Book of Life.

To learn the lesson of humility from Jesus Christ the priest must begin by cultivating a horror for pride and an esteem for humility. For, as "pride goeth before destruction,"[39] so humility establishes the soul on a firm basis. With diffidence in himself and confidence in God, he must

[39] Prov. 16, 18.

then form a determined resolution to make progress in his lesson day by day. He begins the practice of humility by the conscientious performance of his duties, watching and praying as he proceeds lest he fall into temptation. If a fickle world applauds his efforts in the service of God and man, the humble priest will abide in peace as long as he gives the glory to God as Jesus did when the people sang: "Hosanna to the Son of David."[40] If the demons of pride come to tempt him, the angels of peace will minister to the priest as long as he answers with his Master: "Begone, Satan: for it is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve."[41] And if the humor of the world changes and men overwhelm him with humiliations, the priest will still abide in peace as long as he takes these for himself and says with holy Job: "I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I have deserved."[42] And if the world should turn on the priest and persecute him for Christ's sake and hound him to death as it did his Master, he will have learned the lesson of humility if he can then say in the words of the same Master: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[43]

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[40]Matt. 21, 9. [41]Matt. 4, 10. [42]Job 33, 27.
[43]Luke 23, 34.

2. THE SPIRIT OF FAITH.

Jesus Christ.

"The just man liveth by faith."[1] What man is more just than the God-Man Jesus Christ? As God Jesus was of one mind and heart with His heavenly Father, and as man He was most intimately united to God by the Beatific Vision. As Mediator Jesus Christ entered into the economy of the redemption from God's Providence. He made God's plan entirely His own. He adopted the means decided on by His heavenly Father, and He carried out His work in the circumstances of time and place, and in the manner decreed for Him from all eternity.

Jesus realized that the end of His mission was to honor God and reconcile mankind to Him by doing the will of Him that sent Him, even as man had dishonored God by doing his own will in opposition to the Almighty. Hence, from His incarnation to His ascension into heaven, the only solicitude of Jesus was to do the will of His Father as foretold by Moses and the Prophets. And as He was desirous of fulfilling every jot and tittle[2] Providence often cooperated wonderfully in giving Jesus the opportunity He desired. Thus St. Matthew tells us that as an infant He was carried into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod, because His Father had said: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son,"[3] and then the Holy Family retired to Nazareth "that it might be fulfilled which was

[1]Rom. 1, 17. [2]Matt. 5, 18. [3]Matt, 2, 15.

said by the Prophets: That He shall be called a Nazarene."[4] By referring to this same plan Jesus likewise explained His presence among the doctors in the temple, where Mary and Joseph sought Him sorrowing. "How is it that you sought Me?" He asked, "did you not know, that I must be about My Father's business?"[5]

At other times Providence interfered just as marvelously to prevent the malice of men directly destroying the plan of the Almighty. How frequently does the Scripture mention that His enemies sought to apprehend Jesus: "and no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come"?[6] How terrifying to them must have been the experience of the people of Nazareth! "They rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they brought Him to the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong. But He passing through the midst of them, went His way."[7] But when the hour appointed by God really approached, Jesus faced it with His usual calm deliberation. "Father, the hour is come," He exclaimed with a note of exultation, "glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee."[8] And before He actually gave Himself up to His enemies, Jesus impressed the same truth upon those who came to arrest Him. "When I was daily with you in the temple," He said, "you did not stretch forth your hands against Me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."[9]

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[4]Matt. 2, 23. [5]Luke 2, 49. [6]John 7, 30.
[7]Luke 4, 29-30. [8]John 17, 1. [9]Luke 22, 53.

No matter in what phase of His public life we consider Jesus Christ, whether in expounding the word of God to eager listeners, or in working stupendous miracles in behalf of the unfortunate, or in receiving the applause of His friends or the insults of His enemies, He is ever actuated by the same spirit of faith, ever solicitous of doing the will of Him that sent Him. When Peter opposed the fulfilment of God's plan in the garden of Gethsemani by attacking the servants of the high-priest with his sword, Jesus corrected him, saying: "Put up again thy sword into its place: for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father, and He will give Me presently more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done?"[10]

Even during His bitter passion, when His divinity did not support His humanity as usual, Jesus displayed the same spirit of faith and the same conformity to the will of His heavenly Father. Has the world ever seen an instance of heroic self-conquest and conformity to God's will like the example Jesus gave us in His agony in the garden of Gethsemani? Has there ever been such meekness, such patience, such heroic virtues of every kind displayed as Jesus manifested in His passion and death? Who has not detected a note of triumph in those words which Jesus uttered upon the cross before He commended His soul to His heavenly Father? Behold Jesus on the cross reviewing His eventful life! The plan of God

[10]Matt. 26, 52-54.

specified super-abundant atonement, atonement so great that it would not only satisfy the demands of justice, but atonement so appalling that it would compel the reverent attention, the sympathy, the gratitude, and the love which man had denied to God. Man had rebelled: Jesus had humbled Himself till He had become the outcast of the people. Man had insulted God: Jesus had rendered Him ineffable honor, by bearing the ignominy of mankind. Man had overwhelmed God with ingratitude: Jesus had served Him with joy and benediction. Man had squandered time and perverted the gifts of God to his own destruction: Jesus had consecrated every moment of His life to the service of His heavenly Father and had used His gifts to lay up treasures of grace for men. Yes, His life had been entirely spent in glorifying His heavenly Father, in manifesting His love for Him, and in doing His adorable will. With unspeakable satisfaction Jesus, therefore, said: "Consummatum est! It is consummated!"[11]

The Priest.

Holy Church draws a marked distinction between the gift of faith and the spirit of faith. God freely bestows the former on man without any merit on his part; the latter he must acquire by meditating on the truths of faith, and by living according to its teaching. The former is supernatural light, the latter spiritual life. The former enables man to view life from God's standpoint, the latter to live it according to His plan. The former is "the substance of things to be hoped

[11]John 19, 30.

for,"[12] the latter the verification of that hope. Man receives the former in Baptism, he acquires the latter by triumphing over the flesh, the world, and the devil, and living according to the example of Jesus Christ. In Baptism man puts on Christ—"as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ"[13]; by the spirit of faith man lives in Christ, and Christ is formed in him[14] and lives in him.[15] Hence St. Paul exhorts the Ephesians "to put off the old man who is corrupted according to the desire of error, and be renewed in the spirit."[16]

To acquire a spirit of faith a Christian must cease drifting on the stream of time. "With desolation is all the land made desolate; because there is none that considereth in the heart."[17] If the Christian does not pause and reflect on the word of God, it will never take root in his soul. No matter how busy he may be he can never afford to lose sight of the one thing necessary if he is to work for God and heaven. By habitually reflecting on the teaching of faith, he absorbs its spirit, is impelled to purge himself of the obstacles to it, and to regulate his thoughts, desires, and actions in accordance with it. If he encountered no obstacles to the spirit of faith a Christian would acquire it easily by thus checking the inconstancy of his mind. But unfortunately he is opposed by the flesh, the world and the devil, as our Savior shows us in the parable of the sower.[18] Where-

[12]Hebr. 11, 1. [13]Gal. 3, 27. [14]Gal. 4, 19.
[15]Gal. 2, 20. [16]Eph. 4, 22. [17]Jer. 12, 11.
[18]Matt. 13, 3-23.

fore, the Savior warns us that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."[19] To triumph over these enemies a Christian must watch and pray that he enter not into temptation,[20] and oppose humility to the deceptions of pride, mortification to the deceptions of self-love, contempt to the allurements of the world, and prayer to the assaults of the evil spirits.

This spirit of faith is fostered in the young Levite by surrounding him with a spiritual atmosphere in the seminary. In proportion as he there surrenders himself to Jesus Christ will his ordination make him a true "priest according to the order of Melchisedech."[21] When he received the tonsure the cleric said: "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup."[22] As priest he must give evidence of his sincerity in making this choice by manifesting a spirit of faith and union with Jesus Christ in his ministry, for it is thus that he must qualify as a mediator between God and man.

By the light of faith the priest views life from the idea of the Almighty. He realizes that God's interest is supreme, and that man is nothing without Him; that time is transitory, and eternity immutable; that all honor and glory are due to God, and that human happiness is secured by promoting them; and that as Christ sacrificed Himself to give glory to God and obtain salvation for mankind, so it is his duty as mediator with Christ to

[19]Matt. 11, 12. [20]Matt. 26, 41. [21]Hebr. 5, 10.
[22]Ps. 15, 5.

sacrifice himself for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls entrusted to his care. And after making all due allowance for the difference between the personal sacrifices of Christ and of himself, the priest must admit that he is enabled by the spirit of faith to perform his duties as mediator with the same rectitude of intention, with the same purity of motive, and with the same generous conformity to God's will, as characterized the mediatorship of Jesus Christ.

The economy of the redemption was outlined for Jesus Christ by Moses and the Prophets, and made known to Him by the will of His heavenly Father. The mission of the priest is outlined for him by the laws and rubrics of the Church, and defined for him by the voice of his ecclesiastical superiors. Jesus Christ found the means of carrying out the plan of the redemption in the divinity of His person and in His union with His Father; the priest possesses the means in the spiritual treasures which Christ has bequeathed to him in His Church. As Jesus Christ accomplished His work by doing the will of His Father in all things, so the success of the priest's labors will depend on carrying out the same will even to the minutest details. And as Providence cooperated marvelously in the work of Jesus Christ, so will Providence also protect and guide and give a favorable opportunity to the priest who longs to do God's will alone.

God bestows the guidance of His providence and the assistance of His grace only on those who enter into His plan in a spirit of faith and seek to

do His holy will. The priest, then, who believes only in theory and is habitually actuated by the maxims of the world, has little in common with Christ and can expect no special favors from God. The best priest is exposed to the dangers of faith. They surround him on every side and are ever present within him. He must be on his guard to counteract the influence of the world at every step if he wishes to live by faith and be the salt of the earth. The secular press will dissipate his faith even while dogmatizing on faith and morals. Most of the people he meets think more of the almighty dollar than they do of God in actual life. The impulse of their life is material self-interest, and self-gratification the rule of their actions. As no man's faith is immune from infection from within, or from corruption from without, let every priest beware of the danger of contamination. For, like St. Paul, he too, feels the law of sin in his members, seeking to hold his soul captive. If he is not ever on his guard it will turn on him with the power of a giant. If, like Eve in the garden of Eden, he listens, it will plead with the cunning of the serpent, and soon transform him from a brother of Christ into a fallen carnal man. The priest who cherishes a practical faith will never be a minimizer of Catholic teaching or practice. He will find it a stimulant to his faith to develop his Catholic instinct. Instead of seeking for novelties and subtleties in actual life he will strive to conform his mind, and heart, and will, and all his actions to the best usage in the Church as exemplified in the lives of the saints, and especially in the life of our Savior Himself.

"Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men"[23] by living a life of faith. If the priest is "strong in faith"[24] he will "do manfully, and be strengthened"[25] by the use of the same means as he dispenses to the faithful. He has reason to be fearful when he considers his own limitations, and appalled when he reflects on the responsibilities of his office, but, guided by the light of faith, he will put his trust in Jesus Christ, whom he offers daily to the heavenly Father. He may then confidently say with the Psalmist: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"[26] And, the more the priest esteems his vocation and generously makes the sacrifices necessary for the virtues of his divine Master to flourish in his soul, the more will he also grow in favor with God and men.

By praying in a spirit of faith every Christian acquires a wonderful influence with God. "All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive,"[27] is the assurance of our Savior. "Have the faith of God,"[28] He continues, "For, amen I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you."[29] How much more influential with God may the priest be when he recites the Divine Office, the prayer of the Catholic Church, in a spirit of faith! And, above all, when the priest approaches the

[23]Luke 2, 52.
[24]I. Peter 5, 9.
[25]I. Cor. 16, 13.
[26]Ps. 26, 1.
[27]Matt. 21, 22.
[28]Mark 11, 22.
[29]Matt. 17, 19.

altar in a spirit of faith to offer the heavenly Father the adorable Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, is his prayer not omnipotent with God? Indeed, if the faithful in attendance are actuated by the same spirit of faith, they may hear in spirit and in truth the testimony which the beloved disciples heard on Tabor's heights: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him."[30]

[30]Matt. 17, 5.

3. CHASTITY.

Jesus Christ.

The central fact in the history of the world is the incarnation of the Son of God. He was begotten by the sanctity of the Father from all eternity, and in the fulness of time was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. In assuming human nature to become the Mediator of our race the Son of God freely took upon Himself the liability of suffering and death from external causes; but, on account of the intimate union that existed between His divinity and His humanity, He could contract neither the liability to sin, nor the ignorance of mind, nor the weakness of will, nor the inordinate inclinations to evil, which we inherit as children of Adam.

Notwithstanding His transcendent holiness Jesus Christ surrounded Himself with every safeguard of virtue while on earth to teach us not only to esteem and practise virtue, but also to bring home to us the necessity of avoiding the voluntary occasion of sin. This is specially true in regard to the virtue of chastity, against which mankind is easily tempted as a consequence of original sin. Our First Parents had been guilty of sensuality by eating the forbidden fruit, and according to the principle, "by what things a man sinneth, by the same also is he tormented,"[1] drew upon the entire race an inordinate inclination to sensuality.

[1]Wis. 11, 17.

Humanly speaking Jesus Christ could have done no more than He did to safeguard His innocence and to ground Himself in the virtue of chastity before He began His public life. He knew that the sins of parents are visited on their children, that the germ of vice is easily stimulated by an imprudent or wicked nurse, and that evil associations—especially among the young—corrupt good morals. And so He chose not only to be conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of an Immaculate Virgin, but also to be nursed by the same Virgin of virgins, and to live in the company of His Virgin Mother and her virgin spouse, St. Joseph, until He was thirty years of age. After the virgin St. John the Baptist appeared as His precursor, Jesus Christ made it a rule of His public life always to have some of His disciples near Him as a safeguard to His virtue and reputation. Thus, when the Apostles were away evangelizing the people in the towns and hamlets the disciples remained with the Master, and when these were away the Apostles were at His side.

Very few exceptions to this rule are recorded in the Gospel narrative. The first is recorded by St. Matthew when "Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil."[2] The second occurred the night before Jesus chose His Apostles, for "He went out into a mountain to pray, and He passed the whole night in the prayer of God."[3] Then, after feeding the multitude in the desert near the sea of Galilee, the people plotted to take Jesus by force and make Him king.

[2]Matt. 4, 1. [3]Luke 6, 12.

To escape their interfering with the plan of His Father, "forthwith Jesus obliged His disciples to go up into the boat, and to go before Him over the water. And having dismissed the multitude He went into a mountain alone to pray."[4] And the fact that Jesus was alone even at prayer was a circumstance so remarkable that the Evangelist took pains to record it. Finally, when travelling through Samaria on a certain occasion Jesus seated Himself at the historic well of Jacob at Sichar to rest while His disciples went into the town to buy provisions. During their absence a Samaritan woman came to the well for water and was converted by the Savior. Upon the return of the disciples "they wondered that He talked with the woman. Yet no man said: What seekest Thou? or, why talkest Thou with her?"[5] In fact this incident was so extraordinary in the life of our Savior that St. John describes it minutely, and bears testimony to the integrity of the Savior's reputation by stating, that though the disciples were surprised, they were not scandalized, but took it for granted that He must have a good reason to make such an exception to His general rule.

We do read in the Gospels that in the latter part of our Savior's public ministry, when His Church began to assume a more definite organization, pious women from Galilee *followed* (but did not accompany) Jesus and His disciples to minister to them. Still, the only young women mentioned in the Gospel besides Mary Magdalen,

[4]Matt. 14, 22-23. [5]John 4, 27.

the penitent, are the daughter of Jairus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, and the daughter of the Canaanite woman, whom, without even seeing, Jesus freed from the power of the devil in answer to her mother's persistent prayer. Hence, if we call to mind that Jesus was physically perfect and most beautiful to behold, the surprise of the disciples recorded by St. John gives us the clue to the reason why even the bitterest and most unscrupulous of our Savior's enemies did not seek to discredit Him in the eyes of the public by insinuations and accusations on this subject. The reason was because Jesus availed Himself of every external safeguard of chastity so faithfully that He deprived them of every semblance of a foundation on which to base their suspicion. He could therefore confidently ask: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?"[6]

Besides His love for His Virgin Mother Jesus had a special affection for the Apostle St. John and for little children. Of all the Apostles only John "the disciple whom Jesus loved" was a virgin, while the children were dear to our Lord because by their innocence they were still angels in the flesh. In His teaching Jesus admitted that not all were called to embrace a life of virginity, but He urged it on those called to that state, saying, "He that can take, let him take it."[7] Even in His suffering and death Jesus manifested His predilection for chaste souls. For at the Last Supper John was privileged to rest his head on the Sacred Heart of his divine Master, and on

[6]John 8, 46. [7]Matt. 19, 12.

Calvary's heights was honored by having the Virgin Mother of Jesus bequeathed to him as his own, while he was recommended to her as a son. What love, what confidence, what tender solicitude in those parting words: "Woman, behold thy son.—Behold thy mother."[8]

The Priest.

In his consecration as cleric the future priest chooses God for the portion of his inheritance before he is clothed in cassock and surplice, to signify his intention of dying to the world and of cultivating an intimate union with Jesus Christ. He ratifies this choice for life, when receiving the subdeaconate, he makes an implicit vow of chastity. Like Saul and Barnabas he is now set apart to become a mediator between God and man. As the property of the Lord it will henceforth be his duty to devote himself entirely to the service of God and His Church. To contract any human alliance, and thereby to give God a divided heart, would now be a species of robbery for him, as well as a hindrance to his labors as a priest according to the order of Melchisedech.

The Fathers of the Church extol the excellence of Christian chastity and denounce the vice of impurity in no uncertain terms. St. Bernard, for example, maintains that "chastity makes angels of men," while St. Ambrose declares that "he who has preserved his chastity is an angel, and he that has lost it is a devil," and St. Basil goes so far as to say that "chastity renders men like

[8] John 19, 26-27.

to God." In refuting the Sadducees our Savior Himself says that after the general resurrection chaste souls "shall be as the angels of God in heaven."[9] On the other hand, St. Basil of Seleucia calls impurity "a living plague," and St. Bernardine of Sienna "the most noxious of all sins." St. Bonaventure declares that "impurity destroys the germ of every virtue," and so St. Ambrose rightly calls it "the hot-house and mother of all vices." St. Remigius does not hesitate to say that "with the exception of those who die in childhood, most men will be condemned on account of this vice." And St. Alphonsus maintains that "of every hundred that are lost, ninety-nine are condemned on account of impurity, and the hundredth one is not free from it." Hence Father Segneri says, that "as pride has filled hell with angels, so impurity fills it with men."

In the Old Law the Lord prescribed physical perfection, many ablutions, and the wearing of various white garments for His priests, because they typified the priests of the New Law, who were to handle and to sacrifice the Lamb of God. And during the time the Jewish priests served in the temple they were to touch nothing unclean and to live separated from their families to typify the purity which the priests of the New Law should always practise, since they are to mediate daily between God and man. St. Ambrose, therefore, rightly asks, "If such chastity was required of the figure, how much more will it be expected of the reality?" Indeed, chastity is imperatively de-

[9] Matt. 22, 30.

manded of the priest of the New Law to make him worthy of his exalted office, which is the office of Jesus Christ. The Son of God made an heroic sacrifice in descending from heaven to become our Mediator with God; the priest must make a less heroic effort to attain the purity necessary to fill His office in an acceptable manner. The Son of God was prompted solely by His love for His heavenly Father and compassion for mankind in making His sacrifice; the priest must enter into this spirit to receive the strength of divine aid. Finally, Jesus Christ received a name which is above every name as a reward for the sacrifices He made; so the priest is destined to share the glory of Christ in a special manner for all eternity as a reward for his life of sacrifice.

When considered in the light of faith the practice of virginal chastity is not as difficult as some persons may imagine. For it is universally admitted on the one hand that the total abstinence of carnal gratification is comparatively easier than its lawful indulgence in moderation. On the other hand, as St. Thomas teaches, God always gives the grace necessary to fulfil the duties of an office to the person whom He has called to it by His providence. And, besides, as the Council of Trent teaches, God gives the necessary help to fulfil their duty to all who do what they can and who pray for assistance in what is beyond their power.

Being a temple of God not only by his vow but also by Holy Orders, the priest is guilty of a terrible sacrilege if he commits a sin of impurity. He "pollutes the temple of God," says St. Peter

Damian. "He defiles the body of Christ as often as he approaches the altar unworthily," adds St. Jerome. "With what vigilance should they cherish chastity," exclaims Cassian, "who not only touch but also eat the flesh of the Lamb!" "Like the Jews in the court of Caiaphas the impure priest spits in the face of Jesus when he pronounces the words of Consecration," says St. Alphonsus, while St. Vincent Ferrer adds, that "by receiving Communion into an impure heart the priest commits a greater sacrilege than he would commit by casting it into a cesspool." "And how shameful to see a priest preach chastity to others while he himself is the slave of lust," concludes St. Peter Damian. "He is a victim of the devil on whom the evil spirits will feast after he has caused the ruin of countless souls."

No wonder, then, that the Church has always guarded the chastity of her priests with jealous solicitude. During the second century many bishops even refused to ordain a cleric who had ever committed any sin of impurity, and publicly degraded the priest who was guilty of any offence against this virtue. They condemned him to a life of penance, and in some instances maintained that absolution should be denied him even at the hour of death. Though these measures seem harsh, the canons enacted on the subject by Innocent III are the law of the Church today. These ordain: "that no one be admitted to Holy Orders unless he be a virgin, or at least a man of approved chastity, and that those who are ordained be excluded from every grade of office if they lead not chaste lives."

Some dangers to chastity are common to mankind, others are peculiar to the life of the priest. Among the former are: an unbridled imagination, idle curiosity, mental dissipation and precipitation, worldliness, idleness, effeminacy, and carnal friendships. These can be overcome only by self-examination, self-discipline, honest labor, patient endurance and humble prayer. Among the dangers that arise from the nature of a priest's life, the first is the necessity for the priest to adapt himself to the life in the ministry after leaving the seminary. There he was constantly under the eyes of his superiors and subjected to rigid discipline; here he is free, but, like a plant brought out of the hot-house, in danger from the very elements that constitute his life. Another danger to the priest arises from a want of regularity in the ministry. In the seminary he followed his exercises with clock-like precision, and found ample time for prayer, study and recreation. Without a definite rule of life in the ministry the priest may spend so much time in sleep, light reading, and recreation, that he will not find time for prayer, useful study, or the necessary labors of the ministry. A third danger arises from the fact that in the ministry the priest is brought into daily contact with women. In the seminary he had opportunity to purify his imagination from all dangerous impressions. Unless the priest is now on his guard such impressions will be revived and multiplied until they rob him of peace, piety, and devotion. This misfortune may even befall him if the priest is too sympathetic with pious penitents, who at times are influenced more by

sentiment than by an earnest desire for union with God. Besides, the multiplicity of parochial cares may dissipate the piety of the priest, and social visits take the place of recollection and devotion, so that he will relish vain flattery more than meditation and other spiritual exercises. Even the lonesomeness of his solitary life may drive the priest to worldly amusements, instead of being an inducement to prayer and study, or prompt him to be too friendly with his housekeeper instead of taking his necessary recreation in the company of his clerical friends.

If as a student the priest took a sane view of life, and was sincere and conscientious, he laid the foundation for a life of systematic labor, patient endurance, and persevering prayer during his seminary course. He may then rest assured that the dispensations of Providence will protect him, and the grace of God will sustain him in his priestly labors, as long as he cultivates diffidence in himself and confidence in God. But if he was insincere with God and man in the seminary, indolent in his studies, and neglectful of the means of grace, he has grave reason to fear for the future. The best he can now do is to make atonement to God by a life of heroic integrity or he will be in danger of disgracing the priesthood of Jesus Christ. To succeed he should always be on the safer side when there is danger or occasion of sin, and never yield to his self-love by settling his conscience on the merest probable opinion.

Diffidence in self and confidence in God are necessary for the practice of every virtue. They are

especially necessary for the priest to live in union with Christ by a life of virginal chastity. For it may be said of this virtue as the Savior said of detachment from earthly things: "With man this is impossible: but with God all things are possible."[10] Holy Job emphasized this diffidence in himself when he said: "I made a covenant with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin."[11] And Solomon in his youth laid equal stress on his confidence in God, when he said: "As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it; I went to the Lord, and besought Him, and said with my whole heart: Lord of mercy, give me wisdom, for I am a weak man."[12] Both Job and Solomon began with humble faith and childlike devotion; but how different were their after lives? Job continued to mistrust himself and to grow in confidence in God, till he became a model of patient conformity to God's holy will for all times. Solomon, on the other hand, succumbed to the temptations of prosperity. Instead of giving glory to God he became self-sufficient and dispensed himself from the prayer of his youth, and his fall from grace serves as a warning for all ages to come.

Diffidence in self and confidence in God beget humility, vigilance, and generosity in the service of God. Prompted by these dispositions to maintain his union with Jesus Christ, the priest will supplement his vigilance by prayer that he may recognize the dangers that threaten him, be prompt to avoid them where possible, and meet the trials

[10]Matt. 19, 26. [11]Job 31, 1. [12]Wis. 8, 21; 9, 1-4.

of life in union with his divine Master. As long as he continues in these dispositions the priest, by his conformity to his divine Model, qualifies as man's mediator with God, and, as God's mediator with man, will be a powerful agent of heaven in freeing the souls entrusted to his care from the slavery of the flesh and in raising them up to union with God. Sixtus III says: "He will be an angel in the sight of God, and in the sight of men."

4. THE LOVE OF GOD.

Jesus Christ.

Because God the Son loved His Father with an infinite love, He assumed human nature to make atonement to Him for the sins of mankind. From the moment of His incarnation Jesus Christ loved God with a perfect love, thought always of Him, prayed to Him, and did His holy will in all things. "As an infant," says St. Alphonsus, "He chose a manger for His oratory on earth where he constantly made acts of adoration, of love, and of supplication. Oh, how perfect were the acts of love which the Incarnate Word sent up to His Father from the manger! God had commanded man to love Him with all his heart and strength. In the past this precept had never been fulfilled perfectly by any man. The first to accomplish it among women was Mary, and the first among men was Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the precept in a degree infinitely superior to Mary. The love of the Seraphim was cold in comparison to the love of the Infant in the manger of Bethlehem."

A revelation of the interior life of Jesus Christ does not come within the scope of the Gospel narrative. Indeed, it would be beyond the power of human tongue to express or pen to describe it adequately, for it is the life of God Himself in the sanctuary of His human nature. In so far as it could be depicted, however, it would show us how Jesus Christ loved God with His whole heart and soul, with all His mind and strength. The

scenes would vary according to the circumstances of our Savior's life. The oratory of the manger would be exchanged in succession for one in Egypt, at Nazareth, at Capharnaum, on the hillsides or on the water, or wherever Jesus was destined to be. But everywhere His Sacred Heart would be the altar on which His love would offer Him as a victim of propitiation for the sins of mankind, until the sacrifice would finally be consummated in tragic splendor on Calvary's heights.

From the following principles, which He Himself has laid down, however, we may form some idea of the all-consuming love of Jesus for His heavenly Father.

a. *"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."*[1]

Though Jesus applied this proverb to the Pharisees who had blasphemed Him, it indicates the love which actuated Him when applied to His own utterances. When preaching on man's obligations to God, He spoke with such unction that "the people were in admiration at His doctrine, for He was teaching them as one having power."[2] He exhorted His disciples to practise charity towards all mankind. "Love your enemies:" He said, "do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you."[3] He spoke words of mercy to the repentant, and words of comfort to the afflicted. And the zeal, which sought only the glory of God and the welfare of mankind, prompted Jesus to pray even for

[1]Matt. 12, 34. [2]Matt. 7, 28. [3]Matt. 5, 44.

the enemies that had nailed Him to the cross. "Father, forgive them," He pleaded, "for they know not what they do."[4]

b. *"By their fruits you shall know them."*[5]

When we apply this standard of our Savior to His own life, we again discover the ardent love He bore to His heavenly Father. His whole life was devoted to promoting His glory. Jesus was not content with merely exhorting His listeners, and giving them the example of loving God, but He also wrought stupendous miracles to urge them to follow His example. Hence, when the messengers of John the Baptist asked Him: "Art Thou He that is to come, or look we for another?" He confidently referred to His works in confirmation of His mission. "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen," He answered. "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me."[6] Later on when the Jews took up stones to stone Him because He had said "I am the Son of God," Jesus again referred to His works as evidence of His union with God, saying: "Though you will not believe Me, believe the works."[7]

c. *"Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also."*[8]

As the treasure which Jesus sought on earth was no other than the glorification of His heavenly

[4]Luke 23, 34. [5]Matt. 7, 16. [6]Matt. 11, 3-6.
[7]John 10, 38. [8]Matt. 6, 21.

Father, we again find God as the object of the Sacred Heart's affections. Zeal to make man know and love God prompted the actions of Jesus from His incarnation to His ascension. It enabled Him to carry on His work in spite of every opposition, and to sacrifice His very life in ignominy and pain. It enabled Him to denounce the Pharisees, to drive the buyers and sellers out of the temple as well as to win the hearts of the children and preach the Gospel to the poor. And for our edification the love of Jesus was publicly acknowledged by His heavenly Father when He said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."[9]

d. *"If you love Me, keep My commandments."*[10]

As Jesus made the keeping of His commandments the test of man's love for Him, so an infallible test of His love for God was the perfection with which He fulfilled the will of His heavenly Father. As He Himself expressed it, this was His daily bread: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."[11] When on a certain occasion a disciple sought to interfere with this rule of His life as laid down in the Scriptures, Jesus remonstrated with him, saying: "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done?"[12] In fact this conformity to the will of His Father was so uniform, that Jesus effected it even when the violence that He did to Himself caused Him to sweat blood in the garden of Gethsemani. "Father, if Thou wilt," He prayed, "remove this chalice

[9]Matt. 3, 17. [10]John 14, 15. [11]John 4, 34.
[12]Matt. 26, 54.

from Me: but yet not My will, but Thine be done.''[13]

e. *''That the world may know, that I love the Father—abide in My love—love one another, as I have loved you.''*[14]

Not only did Jesus Christ love God but He also sought to enkindle this love in the hearts of men. ''I am come to cast fire on the earth:'' He said, ''and what will I, but that it be kindled?''[15] He made a special effort to foster the love for God in the hearts of His disciples, and at the solemn moment of parting from them urged it upon them as the evidence of His spirit. ''I am the vine,'' He said, ''you the branches. Abide in Me, and I in you. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing. In this is My Father glorified; that you bring forth very much fruit. As the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I: This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.''[16] ''By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.''[17]

The Priest.

In creating man to His own likeness God gave him understanding to direct his actions, free will to govern them, and love as the motive power of life; and by the grace of Baptism enables man to spiritualize these faculties through the practice of faith, hope, and charity. The choice of a Chris-

[13]Luke 22, 42. [14]John 14, 31—15, 9-12.
[15]Luke 12, 49. [16]John 14, 31—15, 12. [17]John 13, 35.

tian henceforth is between rationalism and faith, between self-will and the will of God, and between self-love and the love of God. In so far as he is actuated by the former, man is a natural, animal man or child of the world; in so far as he yields to the latter he lives in Christ and Christ abides in him.

There are three stages in a Christian's love for God. It begins with the fear of the Lord, progresses with the hope of supernatural reward, and is perfected by clinging to God in all things out of gratitude for His favors, but above all on account of His infinite perfection. The first stage suffices for conversion to God, the second is essential to a life of Christian virtue, and the third is peculiar to Christian perfection. Now, as the priesthood is a state of perfection, every priest is expected to be actuated in daily life by a grateful, if not by a disinterested love for God. While maintaining a salutary fear of the Lord to insure him against sin, and the hope of heaven to ground him in virtue, the priest puts on Christ and becomes an *Alter Christus* by loving God above all things, and by acting out of love for God in all things.

By teaching that the priesthood is a state of perfection the Church impresses upon the priest the necessity of a total self-sacrifice on his part to become a worthy mediator through Jesus Christ. She requires that he has died to the flesh and the world and surrendered himself to God by the practice of solid virtue before she consents to consecrate him permanently to God by Holy Or-

ders, and she expects that he will live up to the sanctity of his office every day of his life. For, to follow in the footsteps of his divine Model, the priest must love God with his whole heart and soul, and with all his mind and strength. He must love God not only by sentiment or affection but by sacrificing himself daily to promote His glory and the sanctification of mankind. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[18]

To attain and grow in this love for God the priest must constantly detach his heart from all earthly things. He must empty it before the grace of God can adorn or His love fill it. By this constant detachment the priest is enabled to surrender himself to Jesus Christ and abide in Him. And in so far as he practises this detachment and surrender will Jesus use the priest as His instrument in mediating between God and man. And it is only when he strives thus to be the willing instrument of promoting the union between God and man that he can say with St. Paul: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me."[19]

Though the practice of every Christian virtue increases the love of God in the heart of the priest, there are certain means that foster it more directly than others. Among these he will find the devout celebration of holy Mass and recitation of the Divine Office, and fidelity to his daily meditation and other pious practices, to occupy the first place. By these means he acquires the habit of living in

[18]John 15, 13. [19]Gal. 2, 20.

the presence of God, of thinking reverently of Him, of having recourse to Him with confidence in the trials and temptations of life, and of thanking Him gratefully for the dispensations of His Providence and the light and support of His grace. They enable the priest to speak of God to the people with that unction which marks him as a "man of God" in their sight, and to devote himself entirely to promote God's glory by protecting the souls entrusted to him against the dangers of sin, and by leading them on in the practice of virtue no less by his own example than by his exhortation and priestly ministrations.

Without a special revelation from heaven, it is true, "man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love, or hatred."[20] Still, by applying the standards, by which we gauged the love of Jesus Christ for His heavenly Father, to his own love for God, the priest will protect himself against the insidious delusions of pride and self-love in forming an estimate of his own interior life. He may also find it an incentive to redouble his efforts in the service of God that his ministry be not devoid of fruit, and he appear empty-handed before God on Judgment Day.

a. *"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."*[21]

The regularity and devotion with which the priest recites his daily prayers and the preparation with which he celebrates Mass and the thanksgiving which he makes after it, are an indication of

[20]Eccles. 9, 1. [21]Luke 6, 45.

the degree of the love of God he endeavors to maintain in his heart. Another indication of the love of God is his habit of making pious aspirations and ejaculatory prayers. A third indication arises from the self-control which he exercises over the first impulse of irritation and anger, especially when it is sudden and unforeseen. It is likewise a favorable sign of the love of God in his heart if the priest abstains from all words that are indelicate, untruthful, unjust and uncharitable. On the other hand, when the priest offends against any virtue in his speech, even when that offence is unconscious and involuntary, his words indicate that the love of God does not exercise full control over his mind and heart.

b. *"By their fruits you shall know them."*[22]

As actions speak louder than words his daily conduct is another gauge by which the priest can measure the extent of his love for God. Through a deception of corrupt nature man inclines to esteem his holy desires and pious sentiments at the value of holy deeds even when the Savior insists on more tangible fruits. In gauging his love for God, therefore, the priest should pass over the indications which are merely the promptings of grace and concentrate his attention on those that require a cooperation of good will on his part. Thus his recollection and devout posture during prayer are indicative both of the piety of his mind and the devotion of his heart. In the same way the scrupulous observance of the rubrics in offering

[22]Matt. 7, 16.

the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass and in the administration of the Sacraments, the care with which he prepares his sermons, the attention which he gives to his work in the confessional, to the care of the sick, and to the instruction of the children, are sure indications of the kind of love that actuates the priest in his daily life.

c. *"Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also."*[23]

By this standard the faithful usually judge whether their pastor is a good shepherd or a hireling. If the priest loves to talk money and hates to preach the Gospel, they will be indifferent to his sermons and turn a deaf ear to his appeal for financial support. On the other hand, in proportion as the unction of his words brings the love of God into their hearts, will they also come to the assistance of the priest with material aid. Again, if the priest is actuated by the spirit of the world instead of the love of God, his parishioners will go elsewhere to hear the word of God and to make their peace with Him until they absorb the indifference of their pastor and grow negligent in the practice of their religion. And above all does the priest who is touchy where his own honor is concerned and indifferent to the glory of God and the welfare of souls, lose his influence with his flock and sterilize the ministry of Jesus Christ. But in proportion as the priest is forgetful of himself and devotes himself to his Father's business will his love for God communicate itself to

[23]Matt. 6, 21.

his flock and be an indication that God is the treasure and receives the love of both priest and people.

d. *"If you love Me, keep my commandments."*[24]

Jesus Christ makes the conformity of man's will to the will of God the crucial test of his love. And by the words of Isaias He condemns without mercy all who follow their own will, even in such pious actions as fasting, praying and penitential works. "Behold," he says, "in the day of your fast your own will is found."[25] For the priest the will of God is made known by Catholic theology, by the rubrics, by canon law, especially as expressed in the latest Roman decrees, in the Councils of Trent and the Vatican, in the plenary councils of his country and the synodal decrees of his diocese, and in the commands and wishes of his Ordinary. It is therefore an indication that the love of God actuates him if the priest is studious in learning the will of God for him as thus expressed, if he respects it as such even when it does not harmonize with his own private ideas on the subject, and if he strives to fulfil it to please God. On the other hand it would be an indication of pride, self-will, and self-love if the priest were wanting in reverence and obedience for the representatives of God on earth, or in respect for His holy will as expressed through His human representatives. And it would be an evident sign that the love of God did not actuate him if in addition to this rebellious spirit towards authority, he himself manifested an arbitrary and

[24]John 14, 15. [25]Is. 58, 3.

tyrannical spirit towards his parishioners or even towards his brother priests.

e. *"That the world may know, that I love the Father—love one another."*[26]

Corrupt nature seeks self-indulgence on the one hand, and is harsh and unmerciful on the other. To spiritualize this nature Jesus Christ insists on self-denial and charity as the characteristic traits of His true followers. These two qualities go hand in hand, supplementing one another, and constituting the spirit of our divine Master. They should appear in a striking manner in the priest to show the world that the love of Christ for His Father is still the active principle in His Church today. A priest that loves God will manifest this love in the first place for his brother priests by defending their good name, by appreciating their labors, and by rendering them any assistance that is in his power. In proportion to the intensity of his love for God will the charity of the priest go out to all the souls redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. In his parish he will not lavish his affection on a few friends, but make it embrace all his people with a fatherly solicitude, making their joys his joys and their sorrows his sorrows, and seeking all the while to foster the love of God in the hearts of all. The poor, the sick, the unfortunate, the children and the repentant sinner should feel this charity in a special manner.

If the priest finds that he possesses the love of God in some measure he should say with St. Paul:

[26]John 14, 31.

"By the grace of God, I am what I am,"[27] and then seek to increase his capacity daily till he can say with the same Apostle: "The charity of Christ presseth us."[28] In proportion as the priest surrenders himself to the influence of this spirit, will he abide in Christ and Christ in him, and he will bring forth much fruit. And in the same proportion as he does so will he also learn from the Sacred Heart of Jesus that "Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."[29]

[27]I. Cor. 15, 10. [28]II. Cor. 5, 14. [29]I. Cor. 13, 4-7.

5. CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

Jesus Christ.

Though Jesus Christ sought the glory of God in all things, was actuated by the love of God in all things, and did the will of God in all things, He admitted that as man "the Son cannot do anything of Himself."[1] As the great contemplative of our race He reflected profoundly on the mysteries of faith at an early age. Even before "Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men,"[2] He realized the infinite goodness and power of His heavenly Father, as well as His own dependence upon Him in carrying out His extraordinary and difficult mission. In His sincerity and good will to accomplish His work, Jesus, therefore, formed the habit at an early age of communing with God on the ways and means of accomplishing His undertaking. In consequence of this practice Jesus trusted implicitly in the dispensations of Providence for the opportunity, and in the grace of God for the strength to carry out the divine plan even to its minutest details.

Jesus manifested His confidence in God by never acting inconsiderately or on the impulse of the moment, and by cultivating a spirit of prayer even during the most active periods of His public life. Not only did He prepare Himself for His apostolic labors by spending thirty years in silence and recollection, but even during His public ministry

[1]John 5, 19. [2]Luke 2, 52.

Jesus frequently withdrew from the public to spend some time in prayer. Thus we read, for example, that He spent the whole night preceding His choice of the twelve Apostles in prayer with God. Later on, whenever He happened to be in Jerusalem, He usually spent the evenings in prayer in the garden of Gethsemani in the company of His Apostles. "Judas knew the place; because Jesus had often resorted thither together with His disciples,"[3] and so had no difficulty in betraying His Master after he had once set his heart on selling Him for thirty pieces of silver.

Not only was Jesus imbued with implicit confidence in God Himself, but He also sought to instil the same into the hearts of His disciples by teaching them their dependence on God and the necessity of prayer to receive the divine aid. He gave them the example by His daily prayer, and taught them to pray to His Father that His "will be done on earth as it is in heaven."[4] And He sought to inspire them to pray with childlike confidence when He said: "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."[5] "Therefore I say unto you, all things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you."[6]

As a result of His confidence in God Jesus daily enjoyed the most special protection of Divine Prov-

[3]John 18, 2. [4]Matt. 6, 10. [5]Matt. 7, 7-8.
[6]Mark 11, 24.

idence and received the plentitude of grace to do the will of His Father perfectly. He could therefore say in defending Himself against the unjust accusations of the Jews: "I do nothing of Myself, but as the Father hath taught Me, these things I speak: and He that sent Me, is with Me, and He hath not left Me alone: for I do always the things that please Him."[7] We can judge only indirectly of the measure of grace with which His confidence was rewarded by viewing the perfection with which Jesus accomplished His divine mission. But, as the dispensations of Providence are more evident, we find the record of one or the other with which Jesus was favored in nearly every chapter of the Gospel narrative. They disposed events so that Jesus could fulfil all that the Prophets had foretold of Him, marvelously protected Him at times against the intrigues of His enemies, and enabled Him to perform the most astounding miracles in confirmation of His mission.

In all His labors and sufferings Jesus never relied on His human strength alone, neither did He grow diffident of God's power or good will or tempt Him by rashly exposing Himself to danger, as Satan suggested to Him during His fast in the desert. He could, therefore, say when raising Lazarus to life: "Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. And I know that Thou hearest Me always."[8] In this same spirit He asked God to glorify Him when the hour of His death approached. "Father, the hour is come," He said, "glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify

[7] John 8, 28-29. [8] John 11, 41-42.

Thee.''[9] And to perpetuate the glory of God after His death, Jesus again instilled His confidence in God into His beloved disciples during His discourse after the Last Supper. In that solemn moment of separation He addressed them with His tenderest solicitude and said: ''Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you. Ask and you shall receive; that your joy may be full.''[10]

The Priest.

God's plan for man's sanctification is as simple as it is practical. By His wise providence He has defined the circumstances of man's life and provided superabundant means to enable him to attain his destiny. In His fatherly solicitude God supplies all of good will with the opportunity of conforming to His plan and by His grace effects that conformity in all who place their confidence in Him. To possess this confidence in God man must realize his own helplessness by the practice of faith and humility, and keep the motives of confidence alive in his heart by the practice of meditation and daily communing with God.

In the natural order man is nothing of himself and can do nothing without the sustaining and cooperating influence of the Almighty. His nature is weakened by sin, and his soul, which cannot raise itself heavenwards by its own strength, is in danger of being dragged downward by powerful enemies. If faith did not come to man's assistance, the realization of his helplessness would

[9]John 17, 1. [10]John 16, 23-24.

drive him to despair. But faith gives him peace and security by telling him of the infinite goodness, power, love and mercy of God. "Fear not, I am thy protector, and thy reward exceeding great."[11] It tells him of the infinite merits of Jesus Christ and the mission of the Catholic Church. "Have confidence, I have overcome the world."[12] It teaches him the power of prayer, and encourages him to put his confidence in God as a member of Christ's mystical body in the Communion of Saints.

On account of the corruption of his nature man does not easily realize his dependence on God. This blindness exposes him to the danger of inclining to timidity on the one hand and to rashness on the other. Thus nine of the Apostles thought of their own helplessness when Jesus was taken prisoner and deserted Him. Peter mistook the rectitude of his intention for strength and denied his Master when his courage was put to the test. John alone followed Him at a safe distance. That same evening Jesus had given the eleven His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink. He called them His friends and prayed that they might abide in Him and He in them. And now, though all still loved the Master, the love of only one stands the test of adversity, because only one is truly humble and actuated by a spirit of faith. Indeed, both the prudence and the strength of John are evidence of his union with God.

Besides these difficulties inherent in human nature man's lack of sincerity and good will may

[11]Gen. 15, 1. [12]John 16, 33.

expose his confidence in God to certain dangers. The first is an unbridled imagination, which prevents all serious concentration of mind by flitting from one groundless fear to another. "Take courage, and fear not:" says the Prophet, "God Himself will come and will save you."[13] Another arises from a repugnance to labor and sacrifice. This makes man indifferent to both the end and the means of obtaining it. "The sluggard willeth and willeth not:" says the Wise Man, "but the soul of them that work, shall be made fat."[14] Inordinate self-love is a third danger that threatens not only man's confidence in God but even his union with Him. Finally, antipathy to certain persons or employments may endanger man's confidence by putting his will in opposition to the will of God. To protect himself against these dangers the priest must cultivate a spirit of humility by the practice of self-examination and self-discipline, and a spirit of faith and obedience by fidelity to the practice of meditation and personal union with God.

The faults against confidence in God tend either to presumption or to despair. The first kind results from a false esteem of man's excellence, the second, from a human view of the power, goodness, love and mercy of God. Thus, the priest who is over-confident in himself inclines to underrate and criticize his brother priests, to seek the gratification of his own will instead of the pleasure of God, and his own promotion instead of the glory of God. He is apt to theorize while the devil

[13]Is. 35, 4. [14]Prov. 13, 4.

enslaves his people, and to build more on external form than on the interior working of grace for the success of his ministry. He is as apt to preach without preparation as to assume credit without merit. His ideas on the frequentation of the Sacraments do not harmonize, as a rule, with the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church, neither do his principles on the guidance of souls. He commits many deliberate venial sins, often tarries in the occasion of sin, and is never at a loss to justify his conduct, or at least to settle his conscience by some specious reason.

On the other hand, the priest who wilfully inclines to diffidence in God, is usually wanting in a spirit of faith, in a spirit of prayer, and in a spirit of obedience, and at times even in a correct knowledge of God's perfections. He is easily discouraged on account of his own faults, and aroused to anger by the faults of his people. He makes spasmodic efforts for some years to promote the glory of God, but is discouraged with the results. After viewing the depravity of corrupt nature from the human standpoint for some years more, he drifts aimlessly before he arrives at the meridian of life. Instead of striving to live by faith as a priest of God he permits his sacred ministry to deteriorate into a routine. He contracts the habit of saying "Cui bono?" to the suggestions of his brother priests, and little by little settles down to what seems a perfunctory, vegetative life.

The priest who is sincere and of good will possesses special means of growing in confidence towards God in his vocation as mediator through

Jesus Christ. The Sacrifice of the Mass associates him with the great Mediator of mankind and enables him to find favor with the heavenly Father. As the representative of Christ's mystical members in reciting the Divine Office devoutly he has a special claim on divine favor. As the Ambassador of Christ he should have only God in view and place all his reliance on His assistance and blessing. And, in ministering the mercy of God with zeal to others, he must share the compassion of the Good Shepherd and become acceptable to God and man.

In proportion, then, as the priest is desirous of becoming a worthy mediator through Jesus Christ will he learn to mistrust himself more and more and place his confidence more and more in God. If like his divine Master he conforms to the plan of God in life and in death, and concentrates all his desires, affections and efforts on it, he may confidently say with St. Paul: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me."[15] Wherever he may be placed by his superiors he will know that he is doing God's will, and experience both the protection of Providence and the light and support of grace in doing that holy will in all things. The peace and security which will be his, will sustain him and spur him on in his life of labor and sacrifice, and prompt him to become a faithful imitator of his divine Model. To achieve this happy result, however, the priest must cultivate an intimate, personal union with God. He may overdo his studies, preaching, and other parochial

[15]Phil. 4, 13.

labors, but, according to the example of our Savior, he is in no danger of carrying the spirit of faith, of humility, of recollection, of prayer, and of conformity to God's holy will to excess. On the contrary, the more he cultivates them in daily life will the priest surrender himself to God with the implicit confidence of a child, and become a worthy mediator for his people with almighty God.

6. DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

Jesus Christ.

When "the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin whose name was Mary,"[1] "the Lord had created a new thing upon the earth."[2] Before the time arrived when a "virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel,"[3] that virgin was created in the splendor of the Father to be a worthy mother to His only begotten Son. She was created to the ideal of Him by whom all things were made, and was immaculate before His throne when she found favor with God. The first Eve became the mother of the dead, when she allured Adam to bequeath sin and misery to mankind. This second Eve became the mother of the living when by her humility she caused the Son of God to leave His throne in heaven and to take flesh of her flesh. And as "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,"[4] to redeem mankind from Adam's debt, so Mary was destined to cooperate in the redemption and sanctification of mankind, even as Eve had been instrumental in the fall and enslavement of the human race.

"Though God could have created other worlds more perfect than our own," says St. Thomas, "He could not have made a woman more worthy of the divine maternity than the Virgin Mary."

[1]Luke 1, 26-27. [2]Jer. 31, 22. [3]Is. 7, 14.
[4]John 1, 14.

By a most unique miracle God preserved her from the stain of Adam's sin, and created her soul in His love and friendship. At the first moment of her existence God poured the fulness of grace into Mary's soul and inclined her heart to every virtue. Being conscious of her personal unworthiness of God's favors, "Mary cooperated so perfectly with every grace," says St. Alphonsus, "that the grace she received in the first instant was doubled every moment of her life." Hence, St. Thomas teaches that "grace sufficient for the salvation of all mankind was given to the Blessed Virgin."

By a most astounding miracle the Son of God manifested His confidence in Mary when He assumed human nature from her and surrendered Himself implicitly to her maternal care. When contemplating the marvelous dependence of the Infant Savior on His own creature St. Alphonsus exclaimed: "Oh, what a spectacle it must have been to Paradise to see the Son of God nourished at the breast of a virgin who is His own creature!" And still the Infinite Wisdom showed yet greater confidence in Mary by being subject to her for thirty years. "He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them."[5] In expressing his admiration at this voluntary subjection St. Alphonsus cried out: "O God, how touching to think that in the humble home of Nazareth the Son of God lived as a servant! Yes, a God serving as a boy!"

[5]Luke 2, 51.

Of the public life of Jesus Christ two remarkable things are recorded in the Gospel narrative. In the first place, His desire to do God's will was so great that He called its fulfilment His daily bread. Secondly, to please His Mother, Jesus prevailed on His heavenly Father to change His plan and anticipate His time of performing miracles, when He was a guest at the marriage feast of Cana. For years Jesus had obeyed Mary as man, but here He fulfils her desire as God. Had He merely put His consent into words we might dispute their meaning, but, when Jesus expresses His confidence in Mary by a miracle, both His love for His Mother and His power as God are made manifest.

Finally, Jesus Christ crowned His confidence in Mary by sharing the glory of His triumph with her, even as she had cooperated in the work of the redemption. She, who had crushed the serpent's head, was rewarded by an anticipated resurrection. When her love for God dissolved the bond that held her to earth, Jesus came with all His celestial court to welcome her to heaven. By His triumph over sin and death the Son had acquired all power with God and laid up an infinite treasure of merit to be distributed as mercy upon mankind. Reserving the power to Himself, Jesus crowned Mary as Queen of Heaven, by placing her above all the celestial orders, and as queen of earth, by making her the treasurer of His merits and the dispenser of His mercy. It was, indeed, the most delicate appreciation of Mary's services to make her the channel and distributer of grace and mercy in the sanctification of mankind.

The Priest.

It is universally admitted that devotion to Mary is morally necessary for salvation. For, as the Son of God became man through Mary, He wishes man to come to Him through Mary's influence. As Jesus did not leave His followers orphans but taught them to call His Father their Father, so He recommended them in the person of St. John to Mary's care when He said to His Mother with His dying breath: "Woman, behold thy son."[6] In fact, as Eve is the mother of the human race, so Mary became man's spiritual mother when she sacrificed her maternal right to Jesus who is spiritual life. When she brought forth her first born Mary was in an ecstacy of love, but when, on Calvary's heights, she became the spiritual mother of mankind, a sword of sorrow pierced her soul. The love and maternal solicitude, with which Mary nourished and cared for Jesus, she now bestows upon all her spiritual children. For Jesus has ordained that, as she was intimately associated with Him in the work of the redemption, so shall she now be associated with Him in the sanctification of the world. Hence, a soul that longs for Jesus to come and abide in her, must likewise extend her love and confidence to Mary.

By ordination the priest becomes morally one with Jesus Christ in His office as Mediator, and is thereby incorporated in the sonship of Mary. In virtue of this relationship every priest must cultivate a special confidence in Mary to be a worthy mediator of her divine Son. For in pro-

[6] John 19, 26.

portion as a priest becomes Christlike must he share the confidence which Jesus reposed in Mary. He must look upon Mary, not merely as a friend or as the mother of his spiritual life, but as the cooperator in his labors, even as Jesus honored her in His work of the redemption of mankind. And, the greater his confidence in Mary will be, the more conformable will the priest become to her divine Son, and the more fitted to promote the glory of God and the sanctification of mankind.

Humanly speaking Mary's share in the redemptive work consisted in rendering it possible by giving Jesus life, in educating Him for His sublime mission, and in aiding Him in its accomplishment by her sympathy, prayers, and personal sacrifices. She does the same for every priest in proportion as he reposes his confidence in her. She first gives him spiritual life and the grace of the true faith. If he appreciates this and cooperates with it, Mary obtains for him the grace of his vocation to the priesthood. In proportion to his confidence in her she then prepares him for the ministry, brings souls under his influence, and then counsels and guides him in the exercise of the sacred ministry, by special dispensations of Providence and the influence of grace, even as she did the Apostles and the whole primitive Church in person. Mary sustains the priest in his labors, consoles him in his trials, and crowns his humble efforts for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls with success.

In heaven Mary rejoices with Jesus in His triumph of the cross, by means of which He gave

adequate honor and glory to His eternal Father, and laid the foundation for the sanctification of mankind. She rejoices with the angels in the glory they enjoy through the merits of her Son, and with the saints in the merit they acquired through His precious Blood. To her the entrance of each additional soul into heaven, through the ministry of the priest, is a new source of joy as the final triumph of the cross of her Son, as well as of her maternal solicitude for the children she brought forth in pain and sorrow. And even the "joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance"[7] through the influence of the priest is experienced in a special manner in Mary's heart, because she is the dispenser of mercy, and the tender mercies of the Lord are over all His works.[8]

While rejoicing over the victories thus achieved, Mary is not unmindful of the conflict still raging on earth. She became the Mother of God to become the Mother of all the living. Hence, as long as the eternal destiny of a soul is undecided, Mary's interest in the labors of the priest continues. While yet on earth her Son declared: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself."[9] As the dispenser of grace and mercy Mary is the means by which Jesus now draws souls to Himself. And Mary in turn uses especially the ministry of the priest to bring souls to the knowledge and love of Her divine Son. In fact, Mary is so anxious to instil her own love for Jesus into every human heart, that she lavishes her most special favors in life and

[7]Luke 15, 7. [8]Ps. 144, 9. [9]John 12, 32.

in death upon the priest who cooperates faithfully with her in promoting the glory of God and the sanctification of souls.

To act in harmony with his sublime vocation the priest must, therefore, cultivate a boundless confidence in Mary, both as an individual and as a mediator through Jesus Christ. As an individual he needs a powerful protector against the demons of hell. As a mediator he needs the same influence to supply his deficiency before the throne of God, and to render his labors among men effective. Mary is willing to render the priest this double service. The name of her who crushed the serpent's head, causes the powers of hell to tremble, and the weight of her influence will ever find favor for the priest before the throne of God. And according to the divine plan it is Mary who renders the labors of the priest effective. Through the priest God sows the seed of His word, through Mary He causes it to fructify and transform the life of man. Through the priest God administers the Sacraments, but through Mary He converts souls, triumphs over temptation, roots out evil habits, inflames hearts, sustains the weak, confirms the strong, and crowns all of good will with perseverance and eternal happiness.

Next to Jesus the priest should give the first place in his mind and heart to Mary, that through Mary he may learn to love and serve her divine Son. He should consider the exhortation of St. Bernard, which has been repeated with unction for centuries, to be addressed to himself in a special manner: "In dangers, in perplexities, in doubts

and anxieties, think of Mary, call on Mary; let her name be ever on thy lips, let her love be ever in thy heart." The priest should himself practise the various little devotions in honor of Mary which he recommends to his spiritual children. He should place himself under her protection by having her medal, her scapulars, and her rosary ever on his person. He should love to celebrate her feasts with special splendor. He should daily say the Angelus in honor of her divine Maternity and three Hail Marys morning and night in honor of her Immaculate Conception. He should consider that day ill spent in which he does not recite five decades of her rosary. He should likewise cultivate a special devotion to the Sorrows of Mary: "Forget not the groanings of thy mother."[10] Hence, when in need of the special aid of heaven, let him implore it by reciting the chaplet of the Dolors of Mary and he will surely be heard. For Jesus revealed to St. Elizabeth that He will grant to all who practise a special devotion to the Sorrows of His dear Mother, (1) the grace of true repentance, (2) the special protection of His providence, (3) a tender remembrance of His Passion, (4) and the undying love and assistance of His Mother.

[10] Eccli. 7, 29.

7. VOCATION.

Jesus Christ.

"By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we may live by Him,"[1] who "is the Mediator of the New Testament."[2] "For we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son,"[3] who said of Himself: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by Me."[4] "I am the door of the sheep. I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly."[5] "For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a redemption for all."[6]

As the Mediator of man with God "Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God."[7] He "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,"[8] "who His own self bore our sins in His body upon the tree: that we, being dead to sin, should live to justice."[9] In Him likewise "we have an Advocate with the Father,"[10] "at the right hand of God"[11] "always living to make intercession for us."[12]

As the Mediator of God with man Jesus Christ is "the Angel of the Testament,"[13] the Light that

[1]I. John 4, 9.
[2]Hebr. 9, 15.
[3]Rom. 5, 10.
[4]John 14, 6.
[5]John 10, 7-10.
[6]I. Tim. 2, 5-6.
[7]Eph. 5, 2.
[8]Gal. 3, 13.
[9]I. Petr. 2, 24.
[10]I. John 2, 1.
[11]Rom. 8, 34.
[12]Hebr. 7, 25.
[13]Mal. 3, 1.

shineth in the darkness,[14] "which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world,"[15] and the Head of the Church, in whom it hath well pleased the Father to reconcile all things unto Himself.[16] "It is He who was appointed by God, to be judge of the living and of the dead."[17] And He, in delegating His power as Mediator to His Apostles, said to them: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."[18]

According to the prophet Isaias God the Father made known this vocation as Mediator to His Son when He said: "I the Lord have called Thee in justice, and have given Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles: that Thou mightest open the eyes of the blind, and bring forth the prisoner out of prison."[19] And through St. Paul Jesus Christ tells us with what alacrity He embraced His vocation: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not: but a body Thou hast fitted to Me: Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold I come: in the head of the book it is written of Me: that I should do Thy will, O God."[20]

Jesus Christ prepared Himself so thoroughly for His vocation and followed it so faithfully that

[14]John 1, 5. [15]John 1, 9. [16]Col. 1, 18-20.
[17]Acts 10, 42. [18]Matt. 28, 18-20. [19]Is. 42, 6-7.
[20]Hebr. 10, 5-7.

He could say: "I do always the things that please Him."[21] Even the heavenly Father bore testimony to the truth of His words when He said: "This is My most beloved Son; hear ye Him."[22] Jesus thus pleased His heavenly Father in all things as Mediator and benefited man according to his good will. This devotedness produced the fruits of the Holy Ghost in the daily life of the Savior and disposed Him to be a source of blessing to all who came under His influence. And in consequence of His life of sacrifice Jesus experienced the greatest possible human happiness on earth, triumphed over sin and death, and merited to be crowned King of heaven and earth.

The Priest.

God has at all times employed men to act as mediators between Himself and their fellowmen. In patriarchal times He designated the first born son as His representative, and during the Mosaic dispensation He positively selected the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron for this office. Since the Son of God came to mediate between God and man the heavenly Father has given all power into His hands. Through the instrumentality of His Mother, Jesus Christ now chooses His priests from all nations.[23] Those whom He calls, He draws by the interior allurement of His grace. He enables them to accept His invitation by the dispensations of Providence. And, finally, if they follow His invitation according to the mind of the Church, He calls them officially and ordains them through His representatives on earth.

[21]John 8, 29. [22]Mark 9, 6. [23]Is. 66, 21.

As in the choice of the twelve Apostles, Jesus is always mindful of the natural qualification of His candidates. Since nature is the foundation for grace, "God always gives the requisite qualifications for an office to which He destines a man," as St. Thomas teaches. St. Paul refers to the dispensations of Providence in this matter when he says: "Our sufficiency is from God."[24] As individuals the Apostles were noted for their power of physical endurance, for their humility, for their practical sense, and for their agreeable disposition. These natural qualifications will always be the foundation for the grace of a vocation to the priesthood. Other individuals may possess them, but they are necessary for one who is to perform the duties of a mediator between God and man. He must have physical health to endure the strain of the seminary life and of his apostolic labors. He must be humble to mistrust himself and surrender himself unreservedly to God. He must have a practical judgment to manage the affairs of a parish and to be a safe guide of souls. And he must have an agreeable disposition to gain souls for his divine Master.

God may indicate his vocation to the future priest in various ways. He may speak to him in human words as He did to Moses, to Samuel, and to St. Paul. He may manifest it by an interior illumination as He revealed His truths to some of the inspired writers. By the operation of grace He may suddenly or gradually incline him to the priesthood. By some special dispensation of Prov-

[24] II. Cor. 3, 5.

idence He may manifest it, as He did to St. Ambrose, to St. John Chrysostom, to St. Gregory the Great, to St. Ignatius Loyola, and to others. Finally, by general dispensations of Providence He may place a young man in the seminary and there gradually develop in him a firm and constant will to embrace the priesthood while he is acquiring the requisite learning and holiness of life.

The way in which God sows the seed of a sacerdotal vocation is not as important to the candidate as his personal cooperation with it. For the grace of a vocation to the priesthood becomes efficacious only by the cooperation of the recipient, and remains efficacious only as long as he cooperates with it. Like the seed in the Parable of the Sower this grace may fall by the wayside, on stony ground, or among thorns, and produce no fruit. The young man in the Gospel grew sad when the Savior told him what he must do to attain perfection. Only by diligent application to his studies and the practices of piety, united to a sincere docility towards his superiors, can the candidate for Holy Orders acquire the qualifications of a Mediator between God and man, and maintain them through life.

II.

QUALITIES THAT RENDER GOD'S MEDIATOR ACCEPTABLE TO MAN.

1. THE SYMPATHY OF A FRIEND.

Jesus Christ.

"God is charity"[1] and has loved man "with an everlasting love."[2] He manifested His love for man by creating him to His image and likeness and by destining him for the joys of heaven when He had no need of him. When man offended, God showed him still greater love by pitying him and offering him mercy instead of punishing him according to the rigor of His justice. But man was so infinitely beneath God that he feared to approach Him, and permitted his fear to dissipate his confidence in God and to paralyze his good will in serving Him. To draw man, therefore, "with the cords of Adam,"[3] and to inspire him with both confidence and good will, God assumed human nature and sympathized with him as his most devoted Friend.

As the God-Man came to sympathize with the needy, He ignored those who were so great, rich and powerful that they justified themselves. He preferred to be a friend to the humble, to the poor, and to the contrite of heart that He might raise them up, console them in their trials, and give them the peace which the world cannot give. "I am not come to call the just," He said, "but sinners."[4] As Isaias had foretold the Spirit of the Lord sent Him to preach the Gospel to the poor and to heal the contrite of heart.[5] To gain their

[1]I. John, 4. 16. [2]Jer. 31, 3. [3]Osee 11, 4.
[4]Matt. 9, 13. [5]Is. 61, 1.

confidence Jesus Christ was born in a stable by the wayside. He willingly shared the poverty and privation of the outcast that He might win all by His sympathy and love. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich He became poor, for your sakes; that through His poverty you might be rich."[6]

Not only did Jesus willingly share the life of the poor, but He also went about among them doing good. He sought them out that He might sympathize with them in their affliction and aid them with His divine power. "And seeing the multitudes, He had compassion on them: because they were distressed, and lying like sheep that have no shepherd."[7] In fact, the sympathy which Jesus showed to suffering humanity, was described very graphically by Himself in His answer to the messengers of John the Baptist. "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen," He said. "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them."[8]

Jesus Christ manifested His friendship for man especially by taking the punishment of man's sin upon Himself and making atonement to the heavenly Father for the same. "Many waters cannot quench charity," says the Spouse in the Canticles, "neither can the floods drown it: if a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing."[9] And Jesus in

[6]II. Cor. 8, 9. [7]Matt. 9, 36. [8]Matt. 11, 4-5.
[9]Cant. 8, 7.

speaking of the love of a friend declared that "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[10] Now, in this He "commendeth His charity towards us,"[11] that He laid down His life for His enemies to constrain them by His love to become His friends. The combined value of all the sacrifices which human friends have made to prove their love dwindles into insignificance when compared to this sacrifice of the Friend of mankind.

Even after Jesus had resolved to give His body to the strikers and His cheeks to them that plucked them, and had not turned away His face from them that rebuked Him and spat upon Him,[12] He still longed to show His sympathy for mankind. "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end."[13] Prompted by His friendship His wisdom planned and His power executed the greatest of His miracles, the miracle of His love for His friends, whereby He became the Emmanuel whose "delights were to be with the children of men."[14] Having once become our Friend He devised a means by which He could remain with us to the end of time. In the Holy Eucharist Jesus Christ is our Friend. For our sake He daily renews the oblation of Himself "from the rising of the sun even to the going down,"[15] gives Himself to us as the food of our souls, and multiplies His presence countless times throughout the world that He may be ever near

[10]John 15, 13. [11]Rom. 5, 8. [12]Is. 50, 6.
[13]John 13, 1. [14]Prov. 8, 31. [15]Mal. 1, 11.

to manifest His love and sympathy to all His friends.

The Priest.

When Jesus Christ promulgated the law of charity anew He not only made it of obligation on all mankind, but also defined its observance as the practical test of being His disciple. "A new commandment I give unto you:" He said, "that you love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."[16] By his office as mediator between God and man, the Fathers of the Church tell us, the priest is bound under pain of sin to labor for the salvation of souls. To assume that office with the right dispositions he should possess the perfection of charity, and to perform the duties of his office faithfully he will be called upon to practise charity daily. In fact the practice of charity is expected of the priest in our day as the evident credential of his divine mission.

As Christ became man to sympathize with us, so the priest is considered Christlike in proportion as he expresses his sympathy for his fellowman in look, word, and deed. By means of His sympathy Jesus won the hearts of mankind and disposed them to listen to His teaching and become His disciples. Thus, for example, His sympathy for the Samaritan woman attracted many inhabitants of Sichar to see and hear Him. "We believe," they said, "for we have heard Him, and

[16]John 13, 34-35.

know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.'"[17] So every priest who hopes to be acceptable to man as the mediator of God, must gain the good will of his people by his personal sympathy before he can expect them to lend a willing ear to his preaching or otherwise to profit by his ministrations.

According to the Gospel narrative Jesus Christ possessed four qualities that marked Him as the Friend of mankind. His love for man overflowed His Sacred Heart and gave Him a look so kind that it did not waver, much less turn cold, even when He was overwhelmed with injustice and cruelly left to die upon the cross by the malice of those He came to save. Besides, His manner was so affable—for His delights were to be with the children of men—that He captivated all who saw Him. He was, moreover, of so pleasant or cheerful a disposition that His very presence dispelled gloom and sadness, and raised the minds and hearts of those who met Him to God. And, finally, Jesus was of so sterling integrity of character that He never violated any confidence reposed in Him nor in any other way disregarded the rights of any one.

As nature is the foundation of grace these qualities of a true friend must be the foundation of the priest's apostolic labors. By their means he will make himself at home, wherever his superiors send him, and dispose the people in his favor. To enable him to exercise the qualities of a true friend

[17] John 4, 42.

towards all, he should study the good qualities of his people, without closing his eyes to their defects. In fact, he should credit his people with the virtues they ought to possess and thereby stimulate their good will in acquiring them. Like his Master he is not come to destroy, but to build up and to perfect. If he builds on the good qualities he finds in his people and induces them to live lives of virtue and devotion, the evil will disappear of itself by the grace of God. As long as the priest enters on his labors as the friend of the people and trusts in the blessings of heaven to crown his efforts with success, he will find it easy to be pleasant, affable, and agreeable to all. His love for them will stimulate him in performing his own duties faithfully, and, while maintaining the confidence of all, will guard him against the gossips of the parish, and prevent him from descending to their level by censuring the absent members of his flock.

If nature has not blessed him with a pleasing personality the priest should borrow the qualities of a true friend from his divine Master. He should strive to do this especially if he is naturally melancholy, autocratic, or austere. It would be the height of folly for him to imagine that he must be acceptable to man because he happens to be ordained a priest of God. It would be both foolish and sinful for him to resent any personal slight merely as a lack of respect to the representative of Jesus Christ. When James and John wished to call down fire from heaven on the inhabitants of a town in Samaria that received Him not, Jesus

rebuked them, saying: "The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save."[18] So the priest must endure many things, if like St. Paul he hopes one day to say: "I became all things to all men, that I might save all."[19]

Throughout His public life Jesus Christ never used bitter irony or sarcasm on any one. When the glory of God was in question He certainly denounced the Pharisees and other public enemies of the truth without mercy, but also without manifesting the least shadow of personal resentment. While pitying their blindness and obstinacy it was His duty to protect honest souls from their evil influence. Where no public scandal had to be removed Jesus was most considerate with the faults of others. Could He have been more kind, for example, to Judas or to Peter? The priest must be kind without being weak on the one hand, or stern on the other. To continue the work of his divine Master he should heap coals of fire upon the head[20] of any one that happens to oppose him personally. As a rule he should admonish the public sinner in private before he goes to the extreme of censuring his conduct in public. Even when the safeguarding of innocent persons against scandal will not permit this, he can usually conciliate the guilty one by excusing his motive and intention while denouncing his external conduct. It would certainly be a misfortune if the priest were to imagine that, because he was called to be "the salt of the earth," it was his privilege to disregard the commandment of the love of our

[18] Luke 9, 56. [19] I. Cor. 9, 22. [20] Rom. 12, 20.

neighbor. By acting on this idea he would do Satan's work instead of winning souls for Jesus Christ.

As the representative of Jesus Christ and His Church the priest ought to be the friend of all mankind, and above national, political and social prejudice. Like his divine Master he should look after the affairs of God and be interested in worldly affairs only in so far as they pertain to the glory of God and the welfare of mankind. Though his sympathies must be as comprehensive as the love of God, he should bestow them on the people entrusted to his care according to their needs and their appreciation of his labors. If he wishes to maintain his influence with his people, he must guard against taking a decisive stand on open questions of the day, and never permit himself to be used to further the selfish interests of any clique or individual.

Finally, to persevere as the friend of mankind, the priest must cultivate a boundless confidence in humanity, even as he must cultivate a boundless confidence in the infinite goodness, love, and mercy of God. It would be a delusion for him to expect to lead souls to God without encountering the opposition of the flesh, the world, and the devil. On the contrary, he may expect to be vanquished at times, but he should see to it that it does not happen through pusillanimity or a want of effort on his part in doing God's holy will. Even our Lord had to regret the blindness and obstinacy of some of His hearers, and was saddened by the lament-

able defection of one of His Apostles, but His dying words were: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[21] As long as there is a spark of the love of God in his heart the priest must, therefore, have confidence in the good will of mankind, and seek to stimulate it by his example no less than by his prayers and exhortations. As the supernatural is not so evident in our day as it was in the days of our Savior there is also less real malice to be found. Most people blunder through life, and all that are saved are saved by accepting the mercy of God. It is a rare thing for a person who never got farther into the Church than to have his name recorded on the baptismal register, to refuse the mercy of God when the end comes. If we were to condemn categorically all who are the slaves of their passions till they turn to God on their deathbed, we might be guilty of impugning the mercy of Him who said to the repentant thief on the cross: "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."[22] The arm of the Lord is not shortened in our day, nor is His mercy exhausted. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is still burning with love for men, and the maternal interest of Mary in her spiritual children will endure forever. Every priest knows that the sins of mankind are mostly sins of ignorance and passion, and that the persons who persevere in seeking God in sincerity and in truth by the grace of God develop into the best Christians. It is the priest's duty to foster this sincerity and good will. Until human nature becomes totally

[21] Luke 23, 34. [22] Luke 23, 43.

depraved, and not till then, may the priest despair of the salvation of mankind. If he loses confidence in mankind before then, it is a sign that his own good will has relaxed, and that his love for God and man has grown cold.

2. THE DISINTERESTEDNESS OF A FRIEND.

Jesus Christ.

The most unselfish person that ever lived on earth is Jesus Christ. Though secure of heaven Himself He freely renounced all the honors, riches, and pleasures of this world, to teach man the way to true happiness by His example no less than by His preaching. With a disinterestedness of purpose that has never been equalled He sought only the glory of God by promoting the welfare of mankind. He trusted in the dispensations of Providence to supply His few wants, and proved Himself the Friend of mankind by unselfishly ministering to the wants of all and even laid down His life in ignominy and shame for their salvation. The words which Jesus addressed to the Apostles, after washing their feet at the Last Supper, therefore, described His whole life and emphasized the kind of life which every true follower but especially His priests should live. "I have given you an example," He said, "that as I have done, so you do also."[1]

Though infinitely great and powerful as God, Jesus Christ renounced all worldly honors and became the lowliest of the children of men to teach man detachment from earthly honors and to enrich him with the treasures of grace, which alone can give us the "power to be made the sons of

[1]John 13, 15.

God."[2] As pride was the chief cause of man's misery, the Savior showed His contempt for the honors of life by being born in a stable by the wayside instead of in an earthly palace. "Let us go in spirit to Bethlehem," exclaims St. Bernard: "there we find what to admire, what to love, and what to imitate." Which do we admire most "the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated,"[3] as Isaias saw Him, or the Lord reclining on a bed of straw in the manger, where the shepherds found Him? Is it not true that the more disinterested in earthly honors He appears, the more amiable He becomes to us? Indeed, His example is more efficacious than His miracles to induce us to learn of Him to be meek and humble of heart.

"The outcast of the people"[4] could say: "the world is mine, and the fulness thereof,"[5] but instead He espoused a life of labor and privation and said: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."[6] "Jesus Christ chose to be born in a stable," says Albert the Great, "to teach man that he is a pilgrim on earth and as such must despise the things of earth to value the treasures of heaven." St. Paul had learned this lesson when he said: "I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ."[7]

In the beginning man was placed in "the paradise of pleasure"[8] to pass thence to the glory of

[2]John 1, 12. [3]Is. 6, 1. [4]Ps. 21, 7.
[5]Ps. 49, 12. [6]Matt. 8, 20. [7]Phil. 3, 8.
[8]Gen. 2, 15.

the blessed. By an inordinate indulgence of his senses, however, he turned the pleasures of earth into a curse. St. John describes the consequences of this curse when he says: "All that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."[9] To liberate man from the curse of sense and start him anew on the way to the joys of heaven, Jesus Christ led a life of voluntary self-denial and penance. "Having joy set before Him, He endured the cross."[10] "He was offered because it was His own will."[11] Having gone on the way of toil and ignominy Himself, Jesus could say to all who desired lasting happiness: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."[12]

After treating the honors, comforts, and pleasures of life with contempt Himself Jesus stated the true attitude of a child of God towards them when He said: "Be not solicitous saying, What shall we eat: or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."[13] And as He confirmed His doctrine with miracles Jesus warned His followers against the interested lives of the Scribes and Pharisees. "All things whatsoever they shall say to you," He cautioned them, "observe and do: but according to their works do ye not; for they say, and do not."[14]

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[9]I. John 2, 16. [10]Hebr. 12, 2. [11]Is. 53, 7.
[12]Luke 9, 23. [13]Matt. 6, 31-33. [14]Matt. 23, 3.

The Priest.

Though the priest must expect to be burdened with various material responsibilities, he should ever consider the end, the motive, and the rule of conduct of his office to be entirely spiritual. As the representative of Jesus Christ he must put aside all selfish considerations if he is to act as the disinterested friend of God and man. The nature of his office demands that he promote the glory of God by sacrificing himself for the salvation and sanctification of mankind. Even where the priest is not burdened with the actual care of souls his obligation to mediate between God and man is so imperative that his own salvation depends on its fulfilment. After quoting various Fathers of the Church on this subject St. Alphonsus concludes his treatment of the matter in the words of the Council of Cologne, which says: "Chastisement is reserved for him who accepts Holy Orders without the intention of performing the office of vicar of Jesus Christ by promoting the salvation of souls, because he then becomes, as he is called in the Gospel, a wolf and a robber."

To discharge the duties of a mediator through Christ in a disinterested manner the priest must ascribe the failures in his ministry to his own conduct and not to the perversity of his people, and give the credit of his success to the providence and grace of God. He must beware lest his pride cause him to pose as the efficient cause of the ministry of Jesus Christ, and likewise take heed lest his self-love prompt him to seek the affections of his

people for himself personally, instead of inducing them to love and serve God. He must also be on his guard lest his self-will multiply difficulties for his people by arbitrary regulations instead of smoothing their pathway to heaven. For, by permitting his corrupt nature to substitute self-interest, self-love, and self-will in the place of the glory, the love, and the will of God, the priest would cease to be the instrument of God, and would debase the sacred ministry to serve himself, instead of sacrificing himself for the glory of God and the welfare of immortal souls.

The laity judge of the qualities of the priest as pastor by his disinterestedness. The desire of the human heart for God, which prompted St. Augustine to say: "Thou hast created me, O God, and my soul will never be at rest until it rest in Thee," prompts them to esteem and love the priest as a friend in proportion as he proves himself to be a worthy mediator through Christ. On the other hand, they think less of the priest in proportion as he seeks the praise of men instead of the glory of God, in proportion as he seeks to enrich himself instead of promoting the good of souls, and in proportion as he consults his own pleasure instead of the wants of his people. If St. James warns all Christians by saying: "This is religion clean and undefiled, to keep one's self unspotted from the world,"[15] how much more should the priest, who "is called by God, as Aaron was,"[16] and who is separated from the world as

[15]Jas. 1, 27. [16]Hebr. 5, 4.

were "Saul and Barnabas for the work"[17] of divine mediation, guard himself against the faults that lower him in the estimation of God and man? According to the advice of the Holy Ghost: "If thou wouldst get a friend, try him before thou takest him, and do not credit him easily. For there is a friend for his own occasion, and he will not abide in the day of thy trouble,"[18] the faithful judge of the excellence of a pastor by his disinterestedness.

In proportion as a priest is lacking in humility of mind and heart will he also rise in his own esteem, become self-centered, and seek the applause of the world instead of the pleasure of God. By thus making himself the willing slave of pride the priest forfeits the blessing of heaven upon his labors, and will commit many faults of rash judgment, ridicule, aversion, criticism, and detraction. And in proportion as he forces his own will arbitrarily upon his people, will he also become harsh, severe, unjust, and tyrannical towards them, and alienate their affections not only from himself but also from God and His Church. On this account the Wise Man says: "A hard heart shall fear evil at the last."[19]

When Jesus Christ said: "You cannot serve God and mammon,"[20] it was not His intention to give expression to a mere platitude. He deliberately compared the service of God to that of mammon, and not to that of Bacchus, or Baal, or Venus, to emphasize avarice as the lowest and

[17]Acts 13, 2. [18]Eccli. 6, 7-8. [19]Eccli. 3, 27.
[20]Matt. 6, 24.

most despicable kind of idolatry in the sight of God. In daily life the miser is so universally despised among men that the priest would begin to lose his influence with his flock the moment he were suspected of avarice by them. With this knowledge of human nature to guide him the priest should therefore make his personal disinterestedness so manifest in administering the material affairs of the parish that even the greatest miser in the congregation could find no ground for questioning his motives.

When a priest of energy or of superior executive ability is confined to a limited field of activity, his desire of regulating his parish with mechanical precision may tempt him to offend against the integrity of friendship which the people expect to find in a mediator between God and man. On the one hand he may incline to emphasize his personal regulations more than the law of God, and attempt to force his own ideas upon the people in a spirit foreign to the Master. And on the other hand he is apt to plan his work without consulting its applicability to the circumstances of his congregation. Unless he is on his guard his love of power will impress him with the idea that his people were created for his rule, not that he was ordained to sacrifice himself for his people. If he were to act on this idea he would be apt to take his divine commission to govern his flock in a very literal sense. And as long as he would labor under this delusion he would be diametrically opposed to the disinterestedness of Jesus Christ.

To be the disinterested friend of all his people

the priest cannot permit his feelings to dictate his course of action. If he did he would soon bestow his special attention on certain individuals, or on a certain class of persons to the detriment of the rest. The Savior ever sought out the sinner, the poor, and the afflicted, and converted, helped, and consoled them. In fact He was known as the Friend of the poor, but never the friend of the rich. Of the latter class He said that "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven."[21] It would therefore ill become the representative of Christ to improve on his Master's principles of conduct by paying mere social visits. He has been separated from the world to become the salt of the earth, and in proportion as he would recede from the example of his divine Master would he cripple his own usefulness in the sacred ministry.

Finally, to be an example of Christian disinterestedness, the priest must work in harmony with the neighboring pastors of his locality, and always speak with respect of all priests and religious. Both God and man are willing to make allowance for a difference in the temperament, in the character, and in the age of different priests, but no one could condone envy, detraction, and enmity in a representative of Jesus Christ. We read in the Scriptures how St. Paul severely condemned the distinction which some converts made in favor of their instructors. "Let no man glory in men," he said. "For all things are yours, whether it be

[21]Matt. 19, 24.

Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; for all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's."[22] Now, if the Apostle of the Gentiles condemned as reprehensible in the "little ones in Christ"[23] to manifest too strong a preference for those who had nourished them in the faith, a priest would be deserving of the severest censure if he were to permit any voluntary antipathy for a brother priest or for a religious to taint his service in the vineyard of the Lord.

[22] I. Cor. 3, 22-23. [23] I. Cor. 3, 1.

3. THE GENTLENESS OF A FRIEND.

Jesus Christ.

The Son of God came to bring peace among men by communicating His own divine charity to them. "I am come to cast fire on the earth:" He said, "and what will I, but that it be kindled?"[1] To inflame the heart of man He treated him with the gentleness of a friend. He was so modest in appearance, so simple in His ways, and so considerate in His actions that He conciliated enemies, won strangers, and confirmed His disciples in the possession of peace and concord. Though He spoke with divine authority His temper was so meek, His character so gentle, and His manners so mild that He won souls more by His kindness than by His miracles. The prophet Isaias foretold the gentleness of the Savior when he said: "He shall not cry, nor have respect to person, neither shall His voice be heard abroad. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench."[2]

In His public life Jesus Christ had frequent occasion to use this gentleness of a Friend towards His disciples. He had chosen the foolish things of the world, that He might confound the wise; and the weak things of the world, that He might confound the strong.[3] During the space of three years He transformed twelve simple ignorant men to become His Apostles and the pillars of His

[1]Luke 12, 49. [2]Is. 42, 2-3. [3]I. Cor. 1, 27.

Church. When they contended for the first place in His kingdom "Jesus calling unto Him a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said: Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven."[4] "Whosoever will be the greater among you," He said to them on another occasion, "let him be your minister: And he that will be first among you, shall be your servant. Even as the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many."[5]

What patience did He not manifest towards Judas, what forgiveness towards Peter! Jesus was aware of the traitorous design of Judas, and yet He showed him the same affection which He manifested towards the other Apostles. And even when He dismissed the traitor Jesus used words which the others took as referring to his office as procurator. "That which thou dost, do quickly,"[6] He said. When Judas finally betrayed Him with a kiss, Jesus asked him: "Friend, whereto art thou come?" Peter had been warned by his Master that he would deny Him thrice that very night before the cock would crow twice. He presumed on his own strength, however, and failed miserably. When the cock crew the second time "the Lord turning looked on Peter"[7] and reminded him of His warning. When He met the

[4]Matt. 18, 2-4. [5]Matt. 20, 26-28. [6]John 13, 27.
[7]Luke 22, 61.

disciples at the sea of Galilee Jesus gave Peter an opportunity to repair his fall by a triple protestation of love. Thrice He asked this disciple: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?"[8]

Jesus was particularly kind to the repentant sinner and to the afflicted. When He saw the good dispositions of Zacheus, for example, Jesus invited Himself to be his guest, saying: "Zacheus, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house."[9] In fact He called Himself the Good Shepherd, while His enemies tried to injure His reputation by calling Him "a friend of publicans and sinners."[10] With what charity did He speak to the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob and enlighten her on religious matters before He disclosed His identity as the Messias, saying: "I am He, who am speaking with thee."[11] What a consolation for the poor invalid at the pool of Bethsaida to hear Jesus say: "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk,"[12] or for the widow of Naim to have her dead son restored to life when she was accompanying him to the grave! In fact, it is only by meditating on the goodness of Jesus that we begin to grasp the full meaning of our Lady's words in the Magnificat: "He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away."[13]

Even towards His sworn enemies Jesus displayed a gentleness that was sublime. He repeatedly travelled by circuitous ways to avoid ir-

[8]John 21, 16. [9]Luke 19, 5. [10]Matt. 11, 19.
[11]John 4, 26. [12]John 5, 8. [13]Luke 1, 53.

ritating them by His presence. He defended Himself with moderation against their base accusations and denounced them to the public only in so far as this was necessary to avert scandal. During His trial He was meek as a lamb led to the slaughter and answered not the accusations of His enemies, so that even Pontius Pilate marveled at His conduct. The faithful did then not need John the Baptist to point Him out saying: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world."[14] And while praying for His enemies from the altar of the cross He taught the world the same lesson of gentleness which He had impressed upon His disciples when He said: "Come to Me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is sweet and my burden light."[15]

The Priest.

In proportion as the priest surrenders himself to his office and enters into the spirit of his divine Master will he also treat mankind with the gentleness of a loving friend. Both faith and charity will teach him that the commission: "Behold I send you as lambs among wolves,"[16] can never read "I send you as wolves among lambs." In the exercise of his sacred ministry God's mediator will have many opportunities for reflecting on the fact that the Master had invited His disciples to

[14]John 1, 29. [15]Matt. 11, 28-30. [16]Luke 10, 3.

learn the lesson of gentleness from His own divine Heart before He sent them out to labor and to sacrifice themselves for the welfare of souls. St. Peter had learned this lesson before he proposed the divine Model to the Christian world saying: "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Who, when He was reviled, did not revile: when He suffered, He threatened not: but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly."[17]

"Of all virtues," remarks St. John Chrysostom, "gentleness renders us most like to God," because, as St. Alphonsus explains, "it belongs to God to render good for evil." On this account our divine Savior, in exhorting His disciples to live Godlike lives, said: "Do good to them that hate you—that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven."[18] And to encourage them to aim at so exalted an ideal in their daily lives He promised a reward on earth, saying: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land."[19] Even before the Son of God came to be our Model the Wise Man said: "that which is agreeable to Him, is faith, and meekness."[20] The Psalmist knew how acceptable gentleness was to God, for he said: "The Lord lifteth up the meek,"[21] while Judith made it the foundation of her confidence when she prayed: "The prayer of the humble and the meek hath always pleased Thee."[22]

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[17]I. Petr. 2, 21-23. [18]Matt. 5, 44. [19]Matt. 5, 4.
[20]Eccli. 1, 34-35. [21]Ps. 146, 6. [22]Judith 9, 16.

St. Francis de Sales calls gentleness the flower of charity. In the eyes of the world gentleness makes the priest "a man of God" and a worthy representative of Jesus Christ. "To practise gentleness at all times," says St. Alphonsus, "the priest must always keep his temper under control and meekly endure the injuries inflicted on him by others." To be a true mediator between God and man the priest should never permit his personal feelings to influence his conduct. He is a mediator only through Jesus Christ and can act through Christ only in so far as he dies to all personal sentiment in the exercise of his sacred ministry.

St. Ambrose declares that the priest should always suppress the passion of anger and restrain it when it begins to rebel against the dictates of reason. For, as the Savior exhorted all to love their enemies, so St. John Chrysostom says that gentleness consists in treating those kindly who know not meekness. The Wise Man says that "a mild answer breaketh wrath,"[23] and "a sweet word multiplieth friends, and appeaseth enemies."[24] As a physician must know the disease of his patient to effect a cure, he would be either stupid or conceited if he lost his temper when the patient revealed his ailments to him. In like manner the priest must learn the faults of his flock to heal them. As he is not the agent of God's justice, but of His mercy, he can never say in the name of the Lord: "Revenge is mine, I will repay."[25] He must sacrifice his personal feelings to

[23]Prov. 15, 1. [24]Eccli. 6, 5. [25]Deut. 32, 35.

his office if he desires to have God's blessing upon his labors, or become conformable to his divine Model.

It will occasionally be necessary for the priest to repress the forwardness of some by manifesting his displeasure. But he should not go beyond a look or a frown in resenting a personal affront, and be temperate in speech in defending the cause of religion or the rights of the poor and oppressed. This St. Thomas calls "anger according to right reason," and the Psalmist anger without sin.[26] Still, as it is more difficult to hold one's anger in control than to curb a spirited horse, St. Francis de Sales says it is always expedient to restrain it. For "it is always difficult to expel anger," as St. Augustine warns, "when once it enters the soul." Besides, when a person is corrected with passion, he will attribute the admonition to the anger of his superior rather than to charity or justice, and so will derive little or no benefit from it. Hence St. Alphonsus wisely says that "a single admonition given with sweetness and a tranquil countenance will do more good than a thousand reproaches, no matter how just they may be, as long as they are accompanied with expressions of anger." St. Vincent de Paul was of the same opinion, for he says that "gentleness and sweetness are the most important instruments of success in the sacred ministry."

The circumstance may arise, however, when gentleness would be weakness, and the omission of

[26] Ps. 4, 5.

correction culpable cowardice. A pastor must then be kind to his people and still correct them with just rigor, for he can always please them without betraying Jesus Christ. "Woe to him," says Ezechiel, "who furnishes a pillow to sinners that they may peacefully sleep in their deadly slumber."[27] Such condescension, says St. Augustine, "is not charity but weakness." "Preach the word," writes St. Paul to Timothy, "be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine."[28] St. Gregory explains this exhortation by saying: "Be kind, without being weak, be firm without exasperating, be merciful without sparing more than is expedient."

Correction should always be administered in a spirit of humility and charity. If we reprove others in a spirit of vain conceit God may teach us humility by permitting us to fall into the same fault as He has permitted others. But if we are mindful of our own defects we shall be filled with sympathy for others and become the instruments in the hand of God to enable them to amend their lives. Anger robs us of peace and irritates others. Hence St. Augustine says in his Confessions: "Thou hast decreed, O Lord, that the soul that is inordinate shall be its own torment." On this account St. Francis de Sales says that "it is necessary for us to be gentle not only with others, but also with ourselves." For by becoming indignant with ourselves on account of a fault we give way to disquietude and are apt to commit many other faults. St. Aloysius Gonzaga referred to

[27] See Ezech. 13, 18. [28] II. Tim. 4, 2.

this danger when he said: "The devil always finds fish in troubled waters." If, then, our anger gets the better of us at times we should humbly endeavor to repress it without pausing to examine whether it is right or not to subdue it. We should likewise be mindful of the advice of St. Paul: "Let not the sun go down upon your anger. Give not place to the devil."[29]

If it is difficult to control our temper at all times amid the petty vexations of life, it becomes more difficult to be gentle when subjected to contempt, ingratitude, and insult. Good nature alone will not suffice to keep our temper in control. If we wish to succeed we must unite ourselves closely to our divine Master. In fact, St. Francis of Assisi says "we become conformable to our divine Model by patiently enduring insults in union with Him." And St. Alphonsus teaches that "a soul gains more merit by peacefully bearing an affront than by fasting on bread and water for ten days." It is difficult to realize that the cross protects us against the delusions of pride and self-love, and is conducive to more good in the ministry than the applause of the world. And yet our Savior said to all: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."[30] He Himself was overwhelmed with injuries before He died for us upon the cross, and still it was by His suffering and death and not by His miracles that Jesus became the Redeemer of mankind.

[29]Eph. 4, 26-27. [30]Matt. 16, 24.

As the representative of Christ on earth the priest receives the veneration of devout souls, is treated with indifference by others, and is hated by a few. Naturally the first puff him up, the second chill his ardor, and the last fill him with dejection. But when he meets all in a spirit of faith they strengthen him in virtue and render his ministry fruitful. For it is by practising humility and resignation in the trials which Providence permits others to prepare for us, that we merit God's blessing upon our labors and possess our souls in patience. "In your patience you shall possess your souls."[31]

It is likewise by gentleness in adversity that we become dear to God and acceptable to man as God's mediators. As the Israelites loved Moses more for his gentleness than for his miracles, so the faithful will be guided by the priest in proportion to the gentleness of character with which he rises above the turmoil of an agitated world. If we turn to St. Francis de Sales for an illustration of the sway which gentleness exercises over the hearts of men we find that by this means he converted nearly one hundred thousand heretics. In proportion as we have appropriated the spirit of our divine Master shall we understand how it was possible for the Apostles to go "from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."[32] Perhaps the fondest recollections of our ministry are connected with trials of this kind. At any rate let us accept the fact that

[31]Luke 21, 19. [32]Acts. 5, 41.

Jesus Christ was understood and appreciated by very few, and that the servant is not above the Master. We may also take courage from the words of St. Peter: "If you be reproached for the name of Christ, you shall be blessed: for that which is of the honour, glory, and power of God, and that which is His Spirit, resteth upon you."[33] And the words of our Lord should be an inspiration, on the one hand never to antagonize any one unnecessarily, and on the other hand to bear patiently the trials that others prepare for us. He says: "Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Be glad in that day and rejoice; for behold, your reward is great in heaven."[34]

[33] I. Petr. 4, 14. [34] Luke 6, 22-23.

4. THE FIDELITY OF A FRIEND.

Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ was the faithful friend of mankind. He came to seek and save the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Worldly ambition, self-interest, the flattery of admirers, or the hatred of His enemies could not change His purpose. He spoke in language so simple that all could understand, and with an unction that touched every heart. "He was teaching them as one having power."[1] With the devotedness of a mother's love He bore the ignorance and prejudice of His people, and sought to stimulate their sincerity and good will. He called Himself the Good Shepherd, and did not hesitate to be reputed with the wicked,[2] and to be called "a friend of publicans and sinners"[3] to assist souls to find peace and union with God.

In His compassion for the people Jesus frequently had recourse to His divine power to relieve their temporal wants and cure their bodily infirmities. Even when fatigued with the labors of the day He found time to bless the children. When the disciples wished to prevent the mothers from presenting their little ones, Jesus said to them: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."[4] When He saw the women of Jerusalem weeping out of compassion for Him as He wearily dragged His cross to Calvary, He thought

[1]Matt. 7, 29. [2]Mark 15, 28. [3]Matt. 11, 19.
[4]Mark 10, 14.

of the trials in store for them and said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children."[5] Could anything be more indicative of the fidelity of His friendship for the inhabitants of Jerusalem than the sorrow which Jesus expressed when He considered the misfortune which their obstinacy was drawing upon it? "Jerusalem, Jerusalem," He exclaimed, "thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not? Behold, your house shall be left to you, desolate."[6]

How tender was the Master's solicitude for His disciples! When the hour of Peter's temptation approached Jesus warned him, saying: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren."[7] How delicately He treated John and James when they conspired for the first place in His kingdom and had their mother intercede for them! "My chalice indeed you shall drink;" He said, "but to sit on My right or left hand, is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father."[8] Though these three disciples were the object of the Master's special love, He treated Judas with equal confidence and loyalty to the end. When Judas entered into a wicked agree-

[5]Luke 23, 28. [6]Matt. 23, 37-38. [7]Luke 22, 31-32.
[8]Matt. 20, 23.

ment to betray Him, Jesus warned him by saying to all the disciples: "Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you shall betray Me."[9] When Judas became obstinate and "Satan entered into him," Jesus dismissed him by saying: "That which thou dost, do quickly."[10] By thus sending him out on some business Jesus saved Judas from the vengeance of the other disciples. Even when Judas sealed his treachery with a traitor's kiss, Jesus manifested His friendship for him by asking: "Friend, whereto art thou come?"[11] "Dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"[12]

In His discourse and prayer after the Last Supper our Lord manifested His loyalty to His Apostles in a special manner. After announcing the hour of His departure Jesus consoles them by saying that He will not leave them orphans, that the Father loves them, and that the Paraclete will come upon them. He foretells the great things they will do, and promises them His abiding assistance. "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do:" He assures them, "that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask Me anything in My name, that I will do."[13] He promises them the peace which the world cannot give, and exhorts them to abide in Him that they may bring forth much fruit. He commands them to practise the same fidelity towards one another, with which He loved them, and predicts that their sorrow will be turned into joy. He concludes by asking His heavenly Father

[9]John 13, 21. [10]John 13, 27. [11]Matt. 26, 50.
[12]Luke 22, 48. [13]John 14, 13-14.

to bless them that none of them may be lost, but that all may abide in His love. "Holy Father," He prays, "keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one, as We also are."[14]

The Priest.

To work for his flock with the fidelity of a friend the priest must be actuated by the love of God. As the mediator between God and man he must rise above the narrowness and selfishness of human nature and follow in the footsteps of his divine Model. In proportion as he makes the sacrifices necessary to please God in all things, will he have the peace of God in his heart and His blessing on his labors in the ministry. But if he permits worldly ambition, self-love, and self-will to vitiate his spirit as mediator through Christ, then fidelity in the sacred ministry will become impossible for him. On the one hand he will be unworthy of God's special protection, and on the other hand the disappointments and other trials of life will make the performance of his duties an intolerable burden. By seeking self instead of the glory of God and the welfare of souls the priest would oppose Him who said: "He that is not with Me, is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth."[15]

The fidelity of the priest shows itself in the first place in the performance of the duties of his office. Punctuality, regularity and devotedness on the part of the pastor will make a deeper and more

[14]John 17, 11. [15]Matt. 12, 30.

lasting impression on his flock than weekly exhortations without this good example. "Who, thinkest thou, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath appointed over His family?"[16] asked our Lord. And He answered His own question by emphasizing the fidelity of such a servant in the discharge of his duties. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater: and he that is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater."[17]

In the second place the priest proves his fidelity by keeping his word and fulfilling his promises. It matters not in the sight of God whether he made an appointment with a child or with his foremost parishioner. He is in honor bound to keep it. To excuse his unfaithfulness by pleading forgetfulness would ordinarily be a confession of negligence in the discharge of an obligation, or of indifference to the just claim of another. "A faithful friend," says the Wise Man, "is the medicine of life and immortality."[18] To prove himself such a friend the priest must make every personal sacrifice to keep the appointments which he has made with others. When this is impossible he should notify the persons concerned as soon as possible so that he may cause them no inconvenience on the one hand, and not sacrifice his reputation for integrity on the other.

Another test of the priest's fidelity is keeping as sacred whatever people may tell him in confidence. As the friend of mankind the priest will

[16]Matt. 24, 45. [17]Luke 16, 10. [18]Eccli. 6, 16.

hear many things under the seal of confession which of course he will keep as sacred. But he will also learn many other things, which the souls who have confided in him consider almost as sacred. These too it would be sinful for him to breathe to any one. In fact, it would be a good rule for him to follow never to repeat anything he may happen to hear without the permission of the one who told him. For when a priest has no paternal love for his spiritual children, or if he has no clear perception of the obligation which the Eighth Commandment imposes, he may be seriously tempted against the fidelity of his sacred office and do unspeakable harm to souls by violating it. And in proportion as a priest would get the reputation of being the parish gossip would the days of his usefulness in the place be numbered.

In the popular estimation the priest proves his fidelity as a friend especially by his devotedness to his flock where neither the duties of his office nor any personal promises demand any sacrifice of him. The esteem in which he holds his congregation, the loyalty with which he champions their cause, the reluctance with which he accepts the evidence of the waywardness of any member of his flock, the confidence he displays in the ultimate return of the Prodigal, and the personal interest he takes in the welfare of every parishioner, make the people realize that the priest is their common friend. For by the disinterested solicitude he manifests he says to them as God said to all mankind: "My delights are to be with the children of men."[19]

[19] Prov. 8, 31.

There are a few additional things which the priest must do before he will be accepted as the friend of the community in which he lives. He must above all be *semper idem*, that is, uniformly the same true friend of his flock. He must be of such stability of character that his personal trials will not cloud his official serenity or ruffle his temper as pastor of souls. What a pity it would be for the Church if persons who had to see their pastor on urgent business would have reason to express their anxiety about their approaching interview by saying to themselves: "I hope Father is in good humor this morning."

As the friend of mankind the priest should not be distant and reserved with the people of the community in which he resides. Without being imprudent or permitting undue familiarity, he can meet all with a countenance beaming with kindness, neither waiting to be saluted before bidding them the time of the day, nor expecting a formal introduction before speaking an occasional kind word or performing a trivial act of charity. The formalities of etiquette are proper, and have their proper place, though some of their details were not arranged from a clerical standpoint. In the popular estimation a priest, who is a Christian gentleman, is expected to use certain liberties as the representative of God in his community by which he puts his timid and bashful neighbors at their ease. As soon as he thus makes himself at home with persons of all denominations will they respond to his initiative and manifest their kind

dispositions towards him by greeting him as "Father" wherever they happen to meet him.

Finally, the fidelity due to his office should prompt the priest not only to become the personal friend of every member of his parish and dispose him as friendly towards his non-Catholic neighbors, but also to promote the material welfare of his community. In purely political matters he should proclaim his neutrality and observe it in spite of every influence that may be brought to bear upon him. But he should take an interest in questions of civic improvements, and under the direction of his Ordinary should champion the cause of public charity and social action. As the father and friend of his flock he will find many of the faithful to second his efforts in relieving the destitute and comforting the sick. And in improving the material conditions of the people he will also find many others willing to cooperate. He should be on his guard, however, that this work does not interfere with his more essential work of the sacred ministry.

5. THE ZEAL OF A FRIEND.

Jesus Christ.

The Son of God became man to save souls. The love which prompted Him to take our infirmities upon Himself, also actuated Him in devoting His personal energies to the salvation of mankind, and in establishing the Catholic Church to continue His work to the end of time. In His personal efforts Jesus Christ allured souls from the bondage of sin to a life of virtue by the edifying example of His own life no less than by the influence which His divine personality exercised in teaching mankind to know, to love, and to serve God. His very presence was an object lesson that turned the thoughts of men from material and temporal things to the contemplation of spiritual and eternal affairs, while His conduct was so consistent, His language so simple, and His appeal so full of unction, that only those who steeled themselves against His influence were able to resist the impulse of His zeal.

In His external conduct Jesus Christ scrupulously observed the law of Moses and manifested due respect for those vested with authority. In fact He warned the people at the beginning of His public life that He came not to tear down but to build up. "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."[1] He daily performed

[1]Matt. 5, 17.

the devotions of a true son of Abraham, assisted at the public devotions in the synagogue on the Sabbath, and availed Himself of this opportunity in particular to explain the word of God to the people. In obedience to the law of Moses He went regularly to the temple from the time He was twelve years of age. In obedience to the same law He said to the ten lepers whom He cured: "Go, show yourselves to the priests."[2] Jesus not only said: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's,"[3] but He also paid His personal tax for the support of the government, even though He declared Himself free from its obligation.[4] He could therefore confidently say to His enemies: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?"[5]

His zeal did not permit Jesus to remain idle at Nazareth or at Capharnaum till the people came to Him. "Jesus went about all the cities, and towns, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease, and every infirmity."[6] And when the good people of a certain place urged Him not to depart from them, He said: "To other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God: for therefore am I sent."[7] Like the rich man in the parable who said to his servant: "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled,"[8] Jesus sought all of good will wherever He could find them. To Matthew, the publican of Capharnaum, He said: "Fol-

[2]Luke 17, 14. [3]Matt. 22, 21. [4]See Matt. 17, 26.
[5]John 8, 46. [6]Matt. 9, 35. [7]Luke 4, 43.
[8]Luke 14, 23.

low Me,"[9] even as He said to the fishermen, Peter, Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee. He did not hesitate to be the guest of Zacheus, the chief of the publicans at Jericho, nor to wait for the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob, nor to defend the woman taken in adultery in Jerusalem, nor to praise Mary Magdalen at the banquet which Simon the Pharisee of Naim gave in His honor. Even when fatigued with the labors of the day Jesus found time to speak a kind word to the children and to grant a lengthy interview to Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews in Jerusalem, and to explain the necessity of the supernatural life to him.

Those who beheld Him in a spirit of faith recognized Jesus Christ as "the way, and the truth, and the life."[10] His own words merely explained the necessary details to be observed by every one that had the good will to welcome the Truth, to follow in His Way, and to live His Life. The Apostles were so imbued with this fact that they simply required a profession of faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ of all who wished to be baptized. Thus, "the eunuch said: See, here is water: what doth hinder me from being baptized? And Philip said: If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answering, said: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.—And he baptized him."[11] After He had cured the young man born blind Jesus Himself asked him the same question: "Dost thou believe in the Son of

[9]Matt. 9, 9. [10]John 14, 6. [11]Acts 8, 36-38.

God?'"[12] And before restoring Lazarus to life He said to Martha: "He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live: and every one that liveth, and believeth in Me, shall not die for ever."[13]

Besides the special graces that accompanied our Savior's preaching, His words possessed two qualities that made them effective. They came from the sincerity of His mind and the depth of His loving heart, and were always suited to the circumstances of His audience. He spoke with the greatest simplicity when instructing the illiterate, as in the Sermon on the Mount. He proceeded with Scholastic precision when enlightening Nicodemus, and at times used the subtlest arguments in confounding the Scribes and Pharisees. But it is only when we consider His doctrine in connection with the sanctity of His life and the charm of His personality that we can form some idea of the effect which the zeal of Jesus Christ produced on all that came under His influence. When we view the Master in this light we find that His wonderful miracles merely established the divinity of His nature and mission and manifested the goodness of His loving heart, but that it was His zeal for souls which enabled Him to speak "as one having power."[14]

The Priest.

Throughout his seminary life and especially during the retreat preceding his reception of Holy Orders the necessity of personal sanctity is im-

[12]John 9, 35. [13]John 11, 25-26. [14]Matt. 7, 29.

pressed upon the candidate for the priesthood. Without an eminent degree of self-abnegation and the love of God the priest will soon deteriorate into "a reed shaken with the wind,"[15] instead of ever being "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world."[16] In that condition the words which Jesus spoke of the Pharisees would apply to him: "Let them alone:" He said, "they are blind, and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit."[17] For "there shall be like people like priest."[18] "If the priest that is anointed shall sin,"[19] he makes the people to offend. In the Old Law the Lord complained of this by the Prophet Jeremias: "My people have been a lost flock, their shepherds have caused them to go astray."[20]

On the other hand the priest whose heart is inflamed with the love of God will easily make a favorable impression by his example, for he will naturally follow the advice of the Apostle: "Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed: But in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God."[21] He will earn the esteem of all by the integrity of his private life, and win their good will by his self-sacrificing labors. His sincere humility and confidence in God and his patient, persevering charity towards souls will dispose them to listen to his admonitions and to be guided by his advice. For these are the credentials that make God's mediator acceptable to man.

[15]Matt. 11, 7. [16]Matt. 5, 13-14. [17]Matt. 15, 14.
[18]Osee 4, 9. [19]Lev. 4, 3. [20]Jer. 50, 6.
[21]II. Cor. 6, 3.

The priest should manifest his zeal in the first place by conducting the divine services with all possible reverence and splendor. He should at the same time sow the seed of God's word with great care in his sermons and instructions. In the confessional he should above all treat his penitents with the kindness of the Savior. By these means he will attract, instruct, and reconcile souls to God, and gradually surround himself with a loyal and devoted number, which he may use as the nucleus for his sodalities, and from whom he can select some as particularly suited to aid him in bringing souls to God. And, as long as he keeps all egotism out of his zeal and surrenders himself generously as a willing instrument into the hands of God, he will have abundant opportunities to marvel at the good will which grace can develop in souls and at the sincere conversion which it effects.

By devoting special attention to the children and the sick of his parish the priest will find opportunity to come into personal contact with most of his parishioners. And in proportion as the love of God is in his heart will he use these opportunities to gain their souls for God. Let him be able to say with St. Paul: "I became all things to all men, that I might save all. And I do all things for the Gospel's sake: that I may be made partaker thereof,"[22] and Providence will cooperate wonderfully in his labors by giving him both the opportunity of finding the stray sheep of his flock and the grace to touch their hearts and to lead

[22] I. Cor. 9, 22-23.

them back to the Master. Without creating any sensation he will gradually win every heart and find his sweetest joys in being the spiritual father of the flock entrusted to his care.

In the natural order God has ordained that children receive life and nourishment from their parents until they can provide for themselves. In the spiritual order the children of God are in many ways more dependent on the priest than the children of earth are on their natural parents. In a sense the priest is both father and mother to them. He gives them spiritual life in holy Baptism, cures them of the disease of sin in the Sacrament of Penance, nourishes their souls with Holy Communion, stimulates their spiritual life by his preaching, and induces them to exercise it in a salutary way by the practice of virtue. In the natural order a child may in due time be weaned by its mother and outgrow its father's support. In the spiritual life, however, the soul is dependent on the priest until it enters the gates of heaven. Knowing that Satan will tempt souls to emancipate themselves from his influence, the priest should seek to keep in touch with every member of his flock and maintain the affections of all by his personal sacrifices, so that not one may be lost through a want of his ministration.

After he has established a spirit of intelligent and practical religion in his parish and fostered the frequentation of the Sacraments, the priest may turn his attention to those "other sheep that are not of this fold."[23] There are many excellent

[23]John 10, 16.

souls among them who, through no fault of their own, were born of non-Catholic parents, who will appreciate the gift of the true faith when once they learn its excellence, even as there are others born of Catholic parents who do not value it because they are content to live a worldly life. In proportion as the zeal of the pastor has been communicated to his flock, will his parishioners now become instrumental in arousing the interest of those outside the fold who are not the willing slaves of the flesh and the world. First one will be brought by a relative, and another by a friend or neighbor for instruction, while a third will come unattended like Nicodemus at night to seek light on some doubts that were in his mind for a long time. Then one convert will bring another, and at a mission, perhaps, the grace of God will bring many that were waiting for just such an opportunity. These prospective members should be welcomed with all charity, and made to realize that salvation is a personal matter, that sincerity and good will are necessary in searching for truth and grace, and that an humble submission to all that God has ordained for man's salvation is the first step in becoming a follower of Jesus Christ. As these honest inquirers do not present themselves as already supplied with a Catholic instinct their instruction must be more simple and elementary than that given to a Catholic child preparing for its first Holy Communion. Their instruction should likewise be most thorough. If it is protracted for a long time their association with the priest will assist them very much in outgrowing their prejudice by cultivating Catholic lives.

6. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF A FRIEND.

Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ possessed a threefold knowledge which enabled Him to enlighten all who sought the truth. As God He knew all things. As man Jesus possessed a twofold knowledge. His soul, which enjoyed the Beatific Vision, possessed a greater infused knowledge than is granted to the angels and saints in heaven. Like the rest of mankind He also acquired an experimental knowledge, which was greater than that of the average man in proportion as He excelled by His powers of observation, by the maturity of His judgment, and by the retentiveness of His memory. The Evangelist referred to the development of this knowledge when he said that "Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men."[1]

In enlightening and influencing His auditors to "seek first the kingdom of God, and His justice,"[2] Jesus also enjoyed a unique advantage over His Apostles. He thoroughly understood His audience. He knew their mental capacity, their present difficulties, their past cares, and even their future life. And still with every secret of the human heart as an open book before Him, Jesus said: "I have compassion on the multitude."[3] Instead of displaying His wonderful knowledge and confounding the poor sinners that came to listen to Him, Jesus seemed only concerned about

[1]Luke 2, 52. [2]Matt. 6, 33. [3]Mark 8, 2.

stimulating their good will in the service of God. For, when instructing the people, He generally used language so simple that a child could understand Him, and He illustrated His doctrine with apt comparisons taken from their every-day life.

Though Jesus urged sinners to repentance and sincere conversion, saying: "Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish,"[4] He never scolded or used any immoderate language. He indeed denounced the Pharisees with vigor, but He did this only when it became necessary to remove the scandal they were giving, and even then He manifested no personal resentment towards them. So He also acted in His personal interviews. He indeed drove home a point when, conversing with Nicodemus, He said: "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?"[5] In His interview with the Samaritan woman Jesus enlightened her in regard to the expected Messias, but He did this with such gentleness and charity that she returned to the city and joyfully announced to all she met: "Come and see a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is not He the Christ?"[6] Even when defending the woman taken in adultery Jesus did not overwhelm her with reproach, but said to her after He had caused her hypocritical accusers to depart: "Go, and now sin no more."[7] Thus Jesus Christ made use of His knowledge to prove Himself to be the enlightened and sympathetic friend of mankind,

[4]Luke 13, 5. [5]John 3, 10. [6]John 4, 29.
[7]John 8, 11.

and never anticipated the prerogatives of an avenging Judge.

The Priest.

As mediator between God and man the priest must know the truth and be able to communicate it to his hearers. He must know the way that leads to God, the dangers that infest it, and the means to travel on it with security. He must live the spiritual life and appreciate its blessings if he is to induce others to enter upon it and to make the necessary sacrifices to persevere in it. If he were deficient in these essentials the consequence would be that the blind would be leading the blind. And "if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit."[8] On the other hand if he is proficient in knowledge and pious in his private life "the lips of the wise shall disperse knowledge,"[9] and "the lips of the just teach many."[10] "For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth: because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts."[11]

A threefold knowledge is necessary for the priest to be the enlightened friend of mankind. Besides the book-knowledge which he acquires in the seminary, he needs a knowledge of human nature and the knowledge of applying this twofold knowledge to his flock, in alluring the sinner from his evil ways and in stimulating the virtuous to persevere in the service of God. This knowledge of human nature in general the priest can learn

[8]Matt. 15, 14. [9]Prov. 15, 7. [10]Prov. 10, 21.
[11]Mal. 2, 7.

by studying his own heart. If he can divest himself of his pride and self-love sufficiently to form an impartial judgment he will have little difficulty. But if he is blinded by pride and self-love the Lord may teach him this fundamental knowledge in the school of adversity, for "a fool is born to his own disgrace."[12] If the priest has once acquired a knowledge of human nature by a careful study of himself he can easily acquire a knowledge of the peculiarities and particular wants of the people with whom he has to deal by a little patient observation.

Even after the priest knows all the sacred sciences and has a knowledge of his people and their wants, he must consider what they are apt to take in good part when coming from him in particular before he arrives at a definite conclusion what to say. Even then he should wait for a favorable opportunity to administer any correction, whether in public or in private, and should carefully consider and weigh his words in the sight of God before uttering them. If he act in this way he will not be rashly experimenting, like a physician might try a drug on an animal, but by prudence and prayer in trying to acquire some of that knowledge which enabled the Savior to speak as one having power, he will merit the help of the Holy Spirit and the protection of heaven.

In qualifying as the enlightened friend of mankind the priest indeed labors under many disadvantages. He has neither the omniscience of God nor the infused knowledge of the blessed to aid

[12] Prov. 17, 21.

him in his labors for souls. He is often brought up under totally different circumstances from those in which he is called to exercise the sacred ministry. And besides, even when he has a clear mind and good health, he has so many theoretical and practical things to learn that he may easily become a theorist, or at least lose the divine perspective of life. Hence, even though he has made a brilliant course in the seminary, or should I say because he has made it, he must be a keen observer, a close student, and a man of prayer all the days of his life, if he is to enlighten many unto salvation.

Finally, to be an enlightened friend of mankind the priest must learn three secrets from his divine Model. He must proclaim the word of God with apostolic simplicity and charity, guard against any personalities that might corrupt it, and never lose confidence in the good will of mankind. If he studies the preaching of Jesus Christ he will find that He always "spoke as one having power" and always "had compassion on the multitude." The charity that animated Him in all His actions soothed the wounds which the truths He proclaimed often inflicted, and stimulated His hearers to amendment and devotion. Besides, even though He was God, He never resented the passion and malice of His enemies. And the best proof of His abiding love for man and of His confidence in man's ultimate good will were the Savior's words upon the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[13]

[13] Luke 23, 34.

7. THE PRUDENCE OF A FRIEND.

Jesus Christ.

Next to the charity which Jesus Christ manifested as the Friend of mankind, His public life was remarkable for the prudence He exercised in carrying out His exalted mission. Though He had prepared Himself for His public life by thirty years of retirement Jesus spent forty days in fasting and prayer before He permitted Himself to be tempted by the devil. By this He taught us to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. And before choosing His Apostles "He passed the whole night in the prayer of God,"[1] to teach us to seek special light and guidance in the important affairs of the sacred ministry. But as these are only incidents in the life of our Savior, we shall proceed to study those traits in His life which made Him the prudent Friend of mankind.

As a nation the Jews expected the Messias to be a great king and conqueror, who would liberate God's people from foreign oppression and subjugate the whole world to His dominion. They had become so materialistic in their aspirations that Jesus did not dare to reveal fully the real nature of His mission even to His Apostles until the Holy Ghost enlightened them on Pentecost day. He realized that the rank and file of His countrymen were so utterly incapable of grasping the whole truth of His personality and mission that He contented Himself with attracting the hearts

[1]Luke 6, 12.

of men until they became sufficiently spiritualized to endure a glimpse of the real truth. For, if in the beginning of His public ministry Jesus would have fully outlined the divine plan of the redemption and sanctification of mankind, instead of first proving Himself to be the devoted Friend of mankind, He would have frustrated the very mission He came to fulfil, and been treated as a dreamer and a madman.

In His conduct towards His disciples Jesus Christ avoided the extremes of intimacy and reserve, and treated them with a cordiality that was calculated to inspire both confidence and love. He indeed enlightened them more fully, saying: "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but to them that are without, all things are done in parables."[2] "For the heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears they have been dull of hearing, and their eyes they have shut."[3] But, when, with Philip as their spokesman, they desired to be fully initiated into His plans or at least to be shown the Father, Jesus chided them for their lack of confidence in Him. "Have I been so long a time with you;" He asked, "and have you not known Me? Philip, he that seeth Me seeth the Father also. Do you not believe, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?"[4]

Jesus likewise acted with great prudence towards those who opposed His divine mission. When some enthusiasts wished to take Him and

[2]Mark 4, 11. [3]Matt. 13, 15. [4]John 14, 9-10.

make Him king by force, "Jesus obliged His disciples to go up into the boat, and to go before Him over the water"[5] so that they would not be drawn into the conspiracy. "And having dismissed the multitude, He went into a mountain alone to pray. At the fourth watch of the night, He came to them walking upon the sea,"[6] while the conspirators were still waiting for Him to finish His devotions. Thus He frustrated the selfish aims of those whom He had miraculously fed in the desert. In regard to His sworn enemies the invariable rule of Jesus was to avoid irritating them unnecessarily by His words or even by His presence, and to denounce them with apostolic freedom, but without any evidence of personal resentment, whenever they opposed His divine mission.

Finally, Jesus manifested the same prudence in encouraging the repentant sinner. He indeed exhorted all to "do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,"[7] but He treated them with such charity that He was called "a friend of publicans and sinners."[8] Of Him Isaias had said: "The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench."[9] Thus, He cured the man suffering for thirty-eight years before He said to him: "Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee."[10] He encouraged Peter by saying: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren,"[11] before predicting his lamentable fall. And He encouraged Mary Magdalen to persever-

[5]Matt. 14, 22. [6]Matt. 14, 22-25. [7]Matt. 4, 17.
[8]Matt. 11, 19. [9]Is. 42, 3. [10]John 5, 14.
[11]Luke 22, 32.

ance by publicly saying of her: "Amen I say to you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done, shall be told for a memory of her."[12]

The Priest.

Next to zeal for souls, prudence in exercising it is necessary in the sacred ministry. Sincerity of mind and rectitude of intention do not suffice to carry on the work of Jesus Christ. That sincerity must be liberated from the narrowness of egotism and self-will and enlivened and directed by the wise spirit of the Master before it is fit to lead souls to God. The wisdom of the world will not suffice, "for the wisdom of the flesh is death; but the wisdom of the spirit is life and peace."[13] To acquire this prudence the priest must avoid all feverish haste and precipitation, reflect much, consult his elders, study the conduct of his divine Model, and pray humbly that God may use his unworthy services to promote His glory and the welfare of souls.

To be accepted as the worthy "ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God,"[14] priests must conduct themselves with prudence in their private lives. If they do not wish to be classed as worldly men by the public they must observe the ecclesiastical laws in regard to dress, amusements and business enterprises, and conduct themselves with a gravity becoming their age and station in life. As Christian gentlemen they should be affable and meek towards all, defer-

[12]Matt. 26, 13. [13]Rom. 8, 6. [14]I. Cor. 4, 1.

ential towards superiors, cordial towards equals, and sympathetic and kind towards inferiors. The peace of their own souls should be reflected by that placid and cheerful exterior which the world interprets as re-echoing the words of the Savior: "Come to Me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."[15]

Though the priest should be kind and affable to all, he must be on his guard not to expose himself to criticism on the one hand, and not to permit an opportunity of doing good to pass by on the other. To have the good will of the business men of his community it will suffice to deal impartially with them, to live within his means, and to pay his bills promptly. To be esteemed as a citizen, the priest must be law-abiding, fair-minded, and public spirited. But to be universally esteemed as a man of God, he must be above reproach in his dealings with women, indifferent to the allurements of the world, and prove himself to be consistently a man of Christian zeal and charity.

To hold the esteem and affection of his own people the priest must prove himself at all times to be their prudent and devoted friend. He must manifest these qualities in wisely planning the welfare of the parish, in administering its finances, in managing his own household, in conducting the parish school and sodalities, in selecting his active workers, in forming his choir, and in cultivating a spirit of concord and charity in the parish. He must listen with patience, but

[15]Matt. 11, 28.

without encouraging the slanderer or permitting himself to be used as a tool to further selfish ends. He should be the devoted friend of all, but without making favorites of any. He should never use irony or sarcasm in addressing them in public or in private, and should make a special effort to speak well of his enemies and to be mild with those who are in a passion. If he does not find sufficient diversion in the discharge of his parochial duties it will be better for him to visit his family or to spend some hours in the company of a brother priest than to make social visits in his own parish. Such visits usually breed envy and disturbance in the congregation, and even if they did not, few members of the laity are of such sterling integrity that a prudent priest would wish to be on terms of intimate friendship with them.

When the priest meets with the opposition of any member of his flock, he should take the initiative in reestablishing cordial relations. If upon investigation he finds that his conduct was in any way to blame he should not hesitate to make the proper reparation. Often serious troubles grow out of little misunderstandings that could have been cleared up with a word of explanation in the beginning. Satan loves to make use of these little things to sow the seed of discord between pastor and people to further his own ends. It may also happen that there is a touchy member in the congregation that it is well to humor a little, as we might do with a sickly child. Or perhaps a member has become the slave of some bad habit or has given scandal of some kind. In all such mat-

ters the prudent pastor will effect more by a kind, fatherly interview than by a public denunciation, in which he might by his imprudence do irreparable harm. The priest who is prudent, pious, and kind will ordinarily have no enemies; and no priest will ever have the enemies that hell incited against our Lord. No priest will love to pose as a martyr. But, if any one be persecuted for the cause of Christ, he should forgive and pray for his enemies in imitation of his divine Master, and learn from Him to "heap coals of fire"[16] upon the head of his enemy by returning good for evil.

[16]Rom. 12, 20.

8. THE GOOD EXAMPLE OF A FRIEND.

Jesus Christ.

As the Friend of mankind Jesus Christ enforced the wisdom of His teaching by the influence of His example. Thus, He taught indifference to earthly things and practised detachment from the honors, riches, and pleasures of life. "Be not solicitous for your body,"[1] He said, and at the same time lived a spiritual life. "Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation,"[2] He warned His Apostles while He lived a life of recollection and prayer Himself and promptly repulsed the temptations of Satan. He not only exhorted mankind to "seek first the kingdom of God, and His justice,"[3] but He also sacrificed His own life to save mankind from sin and its consequences. Yes, when the Son of God came to repair the sin of Adam, He, who "hath done all things well,"[4] also gave the example to mankind in doing God's holy will in all things, while Adam gave his descendants the example of rebellion and selfish gratification.

Jesus Christ gave us a sublime example of respect for authority. As a child He went down with Mary and Joseph, and came to Nazareth, and "was subject to them."[5] He submitted to the civil law of the land as well as to the ceremonial law of Moses, and manifested the sincerest veneration for the writings of the Prophets. He professed His profound veneration for His heavenly Father

[1]Matt. 6, 25. [2]Matt. 26, 41. [3]Matt. 6, 33.
[4]Mark 7, 37. [5]Luke 2, 51.

when He said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work."[6] And He not only respected the rights of His fellowmen, but also showed mercy to them by feeding the hungry, curing the sick, consoling the afflicted, and even raising the dead to life. With full confidence in the integrity of His life He could therefore say to His enemies: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?"[7]

"The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister,"[8] Jesus said to His Apostles. Indeed, He labored faithfully as a young man to support His mother. When His public life began He labored just as faithfully for the salvation of mankind. He never claimed any exemptions among His disciples on account of His divine personality and mission. On the contrary He was most considerate towards all, and showed them by His own example what He expressed in words when He said: "Whosoever will be the greater among you, let him be your minister: And he that will be first among you, shall be your servant."[9] In performing this office of servant for His Apostles Jesus did not hesitate to wash their feet at the Last Supper. Having been so considerate, so kind, and so willing to give His services for others all His life, He wished to inculcate this spirit on all His disciples before He died. He therefore said to His Apostles after He had washed their feet: "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also."[10]

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[6]John 4, 34. [7]John 8, 46. [8]Matt. 20, 28.
[9]Matt. 20, 26-27. [10]John 13, 15.

Another very practical example which Jesus gave was patience and perseverance in bearing the trials of life. He Himself attached so much importance to this lesson that He considered its practice the first step in the spiritual life. "If any man will come after Me," He said, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."[11] Consider the patience He had to exercise in transforming uncouth, ignorant fishermen into Apostles of the world. Peter repeatedly opposed the work of the redemption by his blind zeal. James and John conspired for the first place in His kingdom and wished to call down fire from heaven on an unfortunate city in Samaria. Even some of His own relatives did not believe in His divine mission, but criticized Him, saying: "If thou do these things, manifest Thyself to the world."[12]

If Jesus met with difficulties from His own relatives and friends, His patience was tried beyond human endurance by His enemies. Instigated by the powers of darkness, these imputed evil intentions to His conduct, maintained that He wrought miracles by the power of Beelzebub the prince of the devils, repeatedly attempted His life, and finally bribed one of His own disciples to betray Him. After going through the formality of a trial they condemned Jesus to death and worked on the fears of Pontius Pilate till he reluctantly sentenced Him to the ignominious death of the cross. "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb without voice before his shearer, so openeth He not His mouth."[13] After such an example He can

[11]Luke 9, 23. [12]John 7, 4. [13]Acts 8, 32.

say with authority: "In your patience you shall possess your souls."[14]

Jesus Christ declared the first and greatest commandment to be: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind."[15] And by the example of His life He showed us that the fulfilment of the law consists in conforming our minds and wills to the mind and will of God, and in seeking to please Him in all things with generosity and love. In explanation of the second commandment, to love our neighbor as ourselves, Jesus declared that "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[16] And still He manifested greater love than this for mankind, for He laid down His life freely for His enemies. "No man taketh it away from Me:" He said, "but I lay it down of Myself."[17]

Finally, besides preaching "as one having power,"[18] Jesus Christ gave the people an example of piety and devotion. He frequented the synagogue and the temple as the law prescribed, assisted at the services with recollection and devotion, and performed the pious practices in private which tradition sanctioned. He usually spent the evening in prayer and pious conversation with His disciples. When the weather permitted they spent this time in the open, sometimes on a hillside in Galilee and at other times in the garden of Gethsemani at Jerusalem. In fact His personal

[14]Luke 21, 19. [15]Luke 10, 27. [16]John 15, 13.
[17]John 10, 18. [18]Matt. 7, 29.

pieties were as evident as the wonderful miracles which Jesus performed. Even His enemies had to acknowledge both, though they tried to discredit their value. But all of good will were in admiration at His conduct and exclaimed: "He hath done all things well."[19]

The Priest.

As parents first teach their children by their example and enforce their authority by the same means, so Jesus Christ has taught His priests to edify their flocks by their example and to enforce the observance of the law by practising what they preach. It is more by their example than by their preaching that they are to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." Their mission is a labor of love, not of servitude. The hireling might say "I have done my duty" when he has performed the work agreed upon, but the true mediators of Jesus Christ, when they have done all they could to follow the example of their Master will say: "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do."[20] One prayer of the Savior would have sufficed to save the world; but it did not suffice to satisfy His love. "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end,"[21] to the full limit of His human powers, so that He could say with Isaias: "What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it?"[22] By his good example every priest should say to the laity as St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians when

[19]Mark 7, 37. [20]Luke 17, 10. [21]John 13, 1.
[22]Is. 5, 4.

he said: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ."[23]

Like his divine Model the priest should give the example when inculcating respect for authority, and not merely emphasize the obligations of the people. By upholding the authority of the parents in the home and of the teachers in the school he will produce a more salutary effect on the children than by enforcing his own arbitrary will. And by reverence towards God and sacred things, by respect for his lawful superiors, and by a conscientious observance of their laws and regulations he will do more to inculcate respect for authority in the parish than by denouncing the transgressor, or by inveighing against the corruption of the times. Thus, also, by being a loyal law-abiding citizen himself, the priest will do more to promote good citizenship than by habitually cirticizing the law and the officials of the land.

Jesus Christ said more emphatically by His example than by His words: "I am not of the world."[24] And St. Paul, who had thoroughly imbibed the spirit of His Master, made his conduct bear testimony to his words when he said: "The world is crucified to me, and I to the world."[25] To imbue his people with a spirit of faith and contempt for the world it will not suffice for him to be merely the "voice of one crying in the desert"[26]; the personality of the priest must bear testimony to the truth of his word by means of his example. If he is to stimulate their relish for spiritual things

[23]I. Cor. 11, 1. [24]John 17, 14. [25]Gal. 6, 14.
[26]Is. 40, 3.

the priest must say to the people by his daily conduct: "Come to Me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."[27] To disgust them with the duplicity and pretensions of the world he should live among them in the candor and simplicity of his Master. To teach them to value the treasures of heaven he must let them see that he is not attached to the riches of earth. To teach them to treasure holy purity he must make use of the means to excel in it himself. And to teach them fraternal charity, and to induce them to perform works of mercy, the priest must be the voluntary servant of all and thus be like to Him who freely sacrificed Himself for all mankind. Like His Master he may then also say: "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also."[28]

One of the most practical lessons which the priest will be called upon to inculcate by his daily example is patience and resignation in the trials of life. Patience, boundless patience is necessary in the sacred ministry. "In your patience you shall possess your souls,"[29] said the Savior to His Apostles. Every priest should have patience with himself, and be prepared to make the best of the circumstances in which Providence may place him. He should meet the little trials of life with cheerfulness, and generously face the ignorance, selfishness, and ingratitude of mankind. Let him console himself in the company of Him whom "the winds and the sea obey,"[30] and rejoice, like the Apostles, if he is "accounted worthy to suffer reproach for

[27]Matt. 11, 28. [28]John 13, 15. [29]Luke 21, 19.
[30]Matt. 8, 27.

the name of Jesus."[31] After he has suffered in patience himself, the priest will be able to enter into the trials of others, to sympathize with them, to console them, and to teach them patience, perseverance, and conformity to God's holy will. "He that hath not been tried, what manner of things doth he know?"[32] In fact without his own example to emphasize and illustrate his doctrine on patient conformity to our crucified Model, the teaching of the priest would have little or no influence with the faithful.

Finally, as cheerfulness and generosity in making the sacrifices of the ministry demonstrate the priest's love for God and man, so the example of his personal piety and devotion will do much to establish his flock in solid virtue. His prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude will not only be admired but also imitated by them. The personal reverence which he manifests for sacred things and especially for the Blessed Sacrament, and the piety with which he offers up the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, will inspire them with recollection and devotion and enkindle in them the desire for a more intimate union with their Sacramental Lord. The priest who gives a good example to his flock, does not try to drive his people, but like the Good Shepherd "he goeth before them: and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice."[33] "Some perform their devotions in private," says St. Alphonsus, "lest they be seen by others; but it is better for priests to perform them in public, not to seek praise, but to give good example, and there-

[31]Acts 5, 41. [32]Eccli. 34, 11. [33]John 10, 4.

by induce others to praise God." "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."[34]

[34]Matt. 5, 16.

III.

THE MEDIATION IN THE NAME OF MAN.

1. OBEDIENCE.

Jesus Christ.

As Adam brought sin and death into the world by his disobedience so Jesus Christ redeemed man and reconciled him to God by His obedience. Obedience was His predominant characteristic as Mediator of mankind. Obedience made Jesus humble, poor, patient and self-sacrificing. St. Paul describes the God-Man at the moment of His Incarnation as addressing His heavenly Father in the words of the Psalmist: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not: but a body Thou hast fitted to Me: Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold I come: in the head of the book it is written of Me: that I should do Thy will, O God."[1] Jesus called obedience His daily bread, saying: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work."[2] For, said He, "I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."[3] In writing to the Philippians St. Paul tells us the extent of the obedience of Jesus Christ: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."[4]

As the great Mediator between man and God Jesus Christ was solicitous only about doing whatever His heavenly Father had ordained. He was indifferent both to the means by which the will of God was manifested and to the nature of the de-

[1]Hebr. 10, 5-7. [2]John 4, 34. [3]John 6, 38.
[4]Phil. 2, 8.

mands which that Will made on His service. It mattered not to Him if that Will was made known by the laws of nature, by the law of Moses, by the predictions of the Prophets, by God's representatives on earth, or by the dispensations of Providence. To all appearances Jesus obeyed as readily and as perfectly in the manger of Bethlehem, on the flight into Egypt, or in the house of Nazareth, as when walking on the sea of Galilee, when proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation, when transfigured on Tabor, or when crucified on Calvary. He realized that the first step on the part of man towards union with God is humble, generous submission to His holy will, and that the same principle applied equally whether that Will was made known by an angel from heaven or by the perversity of man, whether that Will commanded something naturally agreeable to human nature, or something repugnant and difficult to attain. He therefore did all in His power to make that "Will be done on earth as it is in heaven,"[5] and thereby reestablish the reign of God in the minds and hearts of men.

The obedience of Jesus Christ began with His Incarnation and ended with His triumphant entry into heaven. He submitted to the laws of nature by dwelling nine months in the womb of Mary, by enduring the weakness and dependence of childhood, and the privations and sufferings of an humble and persecuted life. He submitted to the dispensations of Providence by being born in the poor accommodations of the stable at Bethlehem,

[5]Matt. 6, 10.

by making a hurried flight into Egypt, by living in obscurity at Nazareth, and by confining His public labors to the land of Palestine. He submitted to the law of Moses in the circumcision, in the presentation in the Temple, in frequenting the synagogue and the Temple, and in the practice of his private devotions. He submitted to God's representatives on earth by obeying Mary and Joseph, by rendering to Caesar the things that were Caesar's, and by submitting to persecution and death when it was the will of His heavenly Father.

With the exception of the glimpse of His divinity, which caused the doctors in the temple to marvel "at His wisdom and His answers,"[6] Jesus lived a simple, uneventful life at Nazareth until He was thirty years of age. Even when "Jesus began to do and to teach,"[7] He did not manifest Himself to the world[8] as His brethren exhorted Him to do, but in obedience to the will of His heavenly Father confined his labors to the little territory of Palestine. In fact, He replied to the Canaanite woman who begged the cure of her daughter: "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel."[9] And though He said and did things that will influence the lives of men to the end of time, Jesus was more concerned about doing the will of His Father, or "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled,"[10] than that He personally attract the attention of the world.

As long as His hour had not yet come,[11] Jesus

[6]Luke 2, 47. [7]Acts 1, 1. [8]John 7, 4.
[9]Matt. 15, 24. [10]John 19, 36. [11]John 2, 4.

proceeded quietly from day to day to do the divine Will, leaving both the past and the future in the care of His Father in heaven. When that hour finally arrived and the cup of sorrow was pressed to His lips Jesus gave us a sublime example of conforming to the will of God in adversity even as He had given us an example of obedience in every other circumstance of life. "Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from me:" He prayed, "but yet not My will, but Thine be done."[12] Though Jesus did the will of God in all things, His patient submission to the injustice with which He was overwhelmed in His passion and death possesses a special pathos, and teaches us "that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God."[13] As His end approached the Conqueror of sin and death reviewed the work which His Father had given Him to do. The verdict of those who had learned to know and love Him was that "He hath done all things well."[14] In His touching colloquy after the Last Supper Jesus had already reviewed His life and said: "Father, I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."[15] With a loud voice, with a cry of exultation He therefore exclaims as He surrenders His soul to its Maker: "Consummatum est."[16]

The Priest.

Jesus Christ repeatedly emphasized the necessity of obedience for all to attain life everlasting.

[12]Luke 22, 42. [13]Acts 14, 21. [14]Mark 7, 37.
[15]John 17, 4. [16]John 19, 30.

"Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord," He declared, "shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."[17] And He emphasized obedience as the test of man's love for Him when He said: "If you love Me, keep My commandments."[18] When He was preaching on a certain occasion Jesus was told that His Mother and His brethren were outside and desired to speak to Him. He had just been emphasizing the necessity of charity being manifested by good works, and availed Himself of the interruption to declare that those who do the will of God are dearer to Him than mere relations. "Stretching forth His hand towards His disciples, He said: Behold My mother and My brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of My Father, that is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother."[19]

If every soul must be subject to higher powers[20] to prove its love for Christ and attain life everlasting, then obedience must be the characteristic of every priest who is an acceptable mediator between man and God, even as it was of his Model Jesus Christ. If the priest does not respect and obey "higher powers" he does not love his Master and is unworthy to minister in His name. For there is a twofold bond that unites Christ's mystical members to their Head. The one comes from above and is the charity of Christ which presseth us[21] to "love God, because God first hath loved

[17]Matt. 7, 21. [18]John 14, 15. [19]Matt. 12, 49-50.
[20]Rom. 13, 1. [21]II. Cor. 5, 14.

us.'"[22] The other is the submission of His mystical members to higher powers for love of Him. The words of the Savior: "He that heareth you, heareth Me,"[23] were literally addressed to the higher powers in the Church, and apply to the ministry of the priest only in so far as he lives in harmony with them. On the other hand, the words of the Savior: "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber,"[24] should impress upon the priest the importance of laboring in harmony with the Vicar of Christ.

Three motives prompt the priest to surrender his liberty to God by obedience. Without any merit on his part God has chosen him to take up the work of Jesus Christ and mediate between Him and mankind. By his obedience the priest makes reparation to God for the insubordination of his people, even as Christ atoned for the sins of the world. Even though it seem insignificant this voluntary subjection is the only loyal response that man can make to the invitation of the Almighty: "My son, give Me thy heart: and let thy eyes keep My ways."[25] By the practice of obedience the priest does the work of Jesus Christ, is assisted by His grace and protected by Providence to spread the kingdom of God on earth. In proportion as his zeal is directed by obedience will God bless the labors of the priest with a rich harvest of souls, for "an obedient man shall speak of victory,"[26] and thereby give testimony of him

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[22] I. John 4, 19. [23] Luke 10, 16. [24] John 10, 1.
[25] Prov. 23, 26. [26] Prov. 21, 28.

as He did of His Son in the waters of the Jordan: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."[27]

The external bond which unites the members of Christ on earth is obedience or respect for authority. Love for the Catholic Church is another motive that should prompt the priest to practise obedience. The example of the non-Catholic churches in emancipating themselves from all divine authority will exercise its influence on the members of the Church unless it is counteracted by the priest. The spirit of the age is propagated and spread by means of the daily papers, taught in the schools of the land, and even defended in the halls of justice. The preventive and the cure for this plague are reverence for divine authority. As the physician of souls the priest must apply this remedy to his flock to make them "children of obedience."[28] As a tonic for his own soul and to serve as an example to his flock the priest must be a model of obedience, if he wishes to see Christ reign in the minds and hearts of all in his parish.

The third motive which should prompt the priest to respect all lawful authority and to obey his superiors is the solemn promise he made on the day of his ordination. Before he was made "a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech"[29] the Levite was asked by his bishop: "Do you promise me and my successors reverence and obedience?" From the moment he made that promise the priest was bound to obey as a media-

[27]Matt. 3, 17. [28]I. Petr. 1, 14. [29]Ps. 109, 4.

tor through Christ. Death alone can free him from its obligation. On the day of his ordination the priest did not reserve the right to distinguish between the authority of Jesus Christ and the person in whom it happens to be invested. He did not claim the privilege of undermining authority in the concrete while upholding it in the abstract. He did not reserve the right to bring every possible influence to bear on his superiors to permit him to choose any office or position he might prefer, and to change or leave it at his will. Let him therefore beware lest, after having generously undertaken to mediate between God and man, Satan ensnare him by the spirit of the age and rob him of the fruits of his labors.

In proportion as the priest has learned to imitate his divine Model in the practice of obedience will he be indifferent whether the will of God be made known to him by the laws of the Church or by the wish of his ecclesiastical superiors, whether that Will imposes a light or an onerous obligation. He will seek to do *what God wills, when God wills, and as God wills, simply because God wills it,* and not merely because he cannot avoid it or to worm himself into the favor of his superiors; "not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but, as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, with a good will serving, as to the Lord, and not to men."[30] In proportion as he is actuated by the spirit of his Master will the priest see God in the person of

[30] Eph. 6, 6-7.

His representatives and receive their orders with confidence and respect without permitting himself to be influenced in his conduct by their personal qualifications or defects. He will receive their orders with confidence because they come through the channel established by Jesus Christ, and with respect, because he is certain they express the will of God in his regard. If he admits in practice with St. Paul that "there is no power but from God,"[31] he will beware lest his pride and selfwill incline him to criticise and censure his superiors.

Cheerful obedience is rewarded in a special manner by God, and exercises a salutary influence on all who observe it. In speaking of the readiness of our Savior to do God's will the Psalmist said: He "hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way."[32] In fact His holy enthusiasm in doing the will of His heavenly Father communicated itself to His disciples and later on served as a powerful incentive to the Apostles in converting the world. St. Paul, realizing its salutary influence, remarked that "God loveth a cheerful giver."[33] Hence, in proportion as the priest is actuated by the spirit of obedience, will be endeavor to communicate it to his flock by the alacrity with which he obeys his superiors, by the respect with which he speaks of them and reads their public communications, and by the solemn reception he tenders the bishop when he comes to the parish for Confirmation or canonical visitation.

[31]Rom. 13, 1. [32]Ps. 18, 6. [33]II. Cor. 9, 7.

2. A LIFE OF SACRIFICE.

Jesus Christ.

As Mediator between man and God Jesus Christ offered a twofold sacrifice to His heavenly Father: the sacrifice of His actions, and the sacrifice of His life. We shall consider the former here, and treat the latter in the following chapter. We may consider the actions of Jesus in a threefold light: as acts of virtue, as acts of selfdenial, and as acts of sacrifice. When we consider the actions of Jesus Christ in themselves they are specific acts of virtue. When we regard them as His acts, or as subjectively performed by Him, they are acts of selfdenial. And when we contemplate them as the evidence of His love for God and man, they are acts of sacrifice. From the moment the Son of God assumed human nature He entered on His office as Mediator of mankind, and performed every action of His life to give "glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will."[1]

By humbling Himself substantially in His Incarnation the Son of God sacrificed the splendor of His glory to atone to His Father for the pride of man. By this voluntary humiliation He merited for Himself the name of Jesus or Savior and was anointed as the Mediator of mankind. For man He merited the grace to become great by learning from Him to be "meek, and humble of heart."[2]

[1]Luke 2, 14. [2]Matt. 11, 29.

"Thus would the King of Heaven be born," says St. Alphonsus, "because He came to destroy pride which was the cause of man's ruin." "And this shall be a sign unto you," explained the angel to the shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks when the Savior was born, "you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger."[3] When contemplating the humility of the Son of God as He reclined in a manger St. Bernard exclaimed: "My Jesus, the humbler Thou art, the dearer Thou art to me." This is indeed "the sacrifice of praise"[4] by which Christ gave glory to God and showed the way of salvation to mankind.

From His humble throne in the stable of Bethlehem Jesus could say: "The world is Mine, and the fulness thereof,"[5] and still, as St. Paul informs the Corinthians, "He became poor, for your sakes; that through His poverty you might be rich."[6] He sacrificed the splendor of heaven and the treasures of earth to atone for man's inordinate attachment to material things, and taught him to become rich in grace by becoming poor in spirit. "Blessed are the poor in spirit:" He says, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."[7] By espousing poverty Jesus Christ became a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of the people of Israel.[8] "Poverty was not found in heaven," remarks St. Bernard, "but was well known but not appreciated on earth; so the Son of God came

[3]Luke 2, 12. [4]Ps. 49, 23. [5]Ps. 49, 12.
[6]II. Cor. 8, 9. [7]Matt. 5, 3. [8]Luke 2, 32.

down from heaven and espoused her as His bride, to teach man her real excellence."

The King of Heaven was above all earthly power, and yet He freely subjected Himself to every legitimate authority in life and in death. By His obedience He made atonement for the contempt and ingratitude of mankind in rebelling against His heavenly Father. "He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed."[9] By this voluntary sacrifice of His liberty Jesus exemplified those words of the Holy Ghost: "Obedience is better than sacrifices,"[10] and by His triumph over sin and death proved that "an obedient man shall speak of victory."[11] By His obedience Jesus earned for us the grace to imitate His example. He exhorts us to follow in His footsteps. "If thou turn away from doing thy own will," He says, "I will lift thee up above the high places of the earth, and will feed thee with the inheritance of Jacob."[12] And therefore St. Paul remarks that "being consummated, He became to all that obey Him the cause of eternal salvation."[13]

As the Mediator between man and God Jesus Christ manifested His love especially by sacrificing His life for man's redemption. Though every

[9]Is. 53, 4-5. [10]I. Kings 15, 22. [11]Prov. 21, 28.
[12]Is. 58, 13. [13]Hebr. 5, 9.

one of His actions was of infinite value in the sight of God, the heavenly Father had decreed, says St. Thomas, that Jesus Christ should redeem man from the death of sin by His cruel death upon the cross. Having taken upon Himself the sins of the world, He was to be no exception to the rule that "by what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented."[14] "He spared not even His own Son," says St. Paul, "but delivered Him up for us all."[15] "Even when we were dead in sins, hath He quickened us together in Christ, and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places through Christ Jesus."[16]

By sacrificing His life for the redemption of mankind Jesus Christ gave His priests an heroic example of zeal and devotedness that has at all times and in all countries been an incentive to them in sacrificing themselves for the salvation and sanctification of souls. "Thus also," says St. Alphonsus, "by the horror He experienced for sin, He merited for us contrition for our sins. By the abandonment He suffered on the cross, He merited for us strength to retain our courage in all desolation and darkness of spirit. By bowing His head in death He merited for us all the victories we gain over passion and temptation, and the patience which sustains us in the trials of life and in the bitterness of death. In a word, Jesus Christ came to take upon Himself our infirmities and distresses that He might communicate to us His constancy and strength."

[14]Wis. 11, 17. [15]Rom. 8, 32. [16]Eph. 2, 5-6.

The Priest.

There are three reasons which urge the priest to live a life of sacrifice: to atone for sin, to make solid progress in virtue, and to render his ministry efficacious. Though the priest entered the state of perfection on the day of his ordination, he must confess with St. James that "in many things we all offend,"[17] and therefore must do penance to save his soul. "Except you do penance," warns the Savior, "you shall all likewise perish."[18] The priest should do more rigorous penance than the rest of mankind because God expects more from him according to those words of our Savior: "Unto whomsever much is given, of him much shall be required: and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more."[19] In fact as holy Job offered holocausts for his family, saying: "Lest perhaps my sons have sinned in their hearts,"[20] so the priest should do penance to avert the anger of God from his flock. "Every high priest taken from among men," says St. Paul, "is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err: because he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And therefore he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins."[21] And in proportion as he devotes himself to live in union with Jesus Christ as mediator between man and God will he also include the whole Church in his work of atonement

[17]Jas. 3, 2. [18]Luke 13, 5. [19]Luke 12, 48.
[20]Job 1, 5. [21]Hebr. 5, 1-3.

as did St. Paul, who wrote to the Colossians: "I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church."[22]

It is a principle in the spiritual life that, as soon as a man neglects to advance, he begins to recede. Even though the priest has been ever so pious as a seminarian he will soon grow lukewarm and fall when he enters the ministry unless he continues to live a life of voluntary selfdenial. In fact he needs a greater degree of selfdiscipline and penance in the ministry to maintain the degree of sanctity which he acquired in the seminary than it took to attain it. In the seminary he lived a life of seclusion and subjection in common with others who shared his labors and aspirations, but in the ministry he occupies a position of preeminence and authority, and stands alone, unless he is a member of a Religious Order. On this account St. Alphonsus does not hesitate to say with St. Gregory that as a rule priests do not acquire greater sanctity in the ministry than they had on the day of their ordination, and are ever in danger of receding from their first fervor. Hence, if the priest is to let his "light shine before men" in all its lustre, and remain "the salt of the earth" without becoming insipid, he must live a life of constant sacrifice. And the canons of the Councils and the statutes of his diocese, which curtail his personal liberty in so many ways, were composed for no other purpose than to be a safe rule of conduct or a guide for him in the practice of virtue.

[22] Col. 1, 24.

Without the determination to live a life of sacrifice, and without the practical application of this salutary resolution in the details of his daily life, the fervor of a saint would soon grow cold. His humility, his obedience, and charity would soon be replaced by conceit, selfwill, and the love of ease, of comfort, and of pleasure, while he would degenerate into a deluded victim of pride and selflove. If then at least he would turn a willing ear to the pleadings of grace, he would perhaps hear more than the Master directed St. John to write to the angel of the church of Ephesus: "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity. Be mindful therefore from whence thou art fallen: and do penance, and do the first works. Or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou do penance."[23]

Finally, the priest must live a life of sacrifice to render his labors as mediator between man and God effective. By his exemplary life he must dispose the laity to accept his ministration in a friendly spirit. "So let your light shine before men," advises our Savior, "that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."[24] The priest must let his light shine before men especially by the practice of selfdenial and charity, the two virtues which Jesus Christ made the characteristics of all His followers. By emphasizing these in his daily life the priest can easily comply with the advice which St. Paul gave

[23]Apoc. 2, 4-5. [24]Matt. 5, 16.

to Titus, saying: "In all things show thyself an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity. The sound word that can not be blamed: that he, who is on the contrary part, may be afraid, having no evil to say of us."[25]

To apply the merits of Christ to his flock the priest must live a life of sacrifice. For, as God decreed that man be redeemed from eternal death by the death of His Son, so has He also established the rule that the merits of the cross be applied to souls by means of the cross. And as Jesus Christ sacrificed His own life to merit the salvation of mankind, so He expects that all whom He calls to mediate between man and God, should sacrifice their lives in His service that they may merit to apply His merits to individual souls.

The rank and file of the faithful are so accustomed to this life of sacrifice on the part of the clergy, that they ordinarily give no more thought to it than the Israelites of old gave to the goat of the atonement, which the high priest turned out into the desert[26] after loading him with the sins of Israel. The people accept facts as they find them. As a rule they have no more idea of what a life of sacrifice costs the priest than the Jews had of the agony of Jesus in the garden, or of His abandonment on the cross. They do not ask themselves why the priest should sacrifice himself for them any more than they ask themselves why Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself for all mankind. They take both facts for granted, and thus

[25]Tit. 2, 8. [26]Levit. 16, 21.

often force the priest to share in the abandonment of his Master. But, just as Providence permits this, so does Providence ordain that the success of the priest as mediator depends on his conformity to Jesus Christ. In proportion as he follows the example of his Master in obedience, in patience and perseverance, and in humble prayer, will he be successful in reconciling souls to God as well as in leading them on the way of virtue according to the pattern that was shown him in the mount.[27]

[27] Ex. 25, 40.

3. THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST.

Jesus Christ.

We have "a great High Priest that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God."[1] "Christ died once for our sins, the Just for the unjust: that He might offer us to God, being put to death indeed in the flesh, but enlivened in the spirit."[2] "And whereas indeed He was the Son of God, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered: and being consummated, He became, to all that obey Him, the cause of eternal salvation. Called by God a High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech,"[3] "Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness."[4] "For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of a heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? And therefore He is the Mediator of the New Testament: that by means of His death, for the redemption of those transgressions, which were under the former Testament, they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance."[5]

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the Scriptures, presents a threefold phase. At the

[1]Hebr. 4, 14. [2]I. Petr. 3, 18. [3]Hebr. 5, 8-10.
[4]Eph. 5, 2. [5]Hebr. 9, 13-15.

Last Supper it is preeminently a sacrifice of peace and benediction. On Calvary it is a sacrifice of superabundant satisfaction to God and of infinite merit for man. In the Mass it is a memorial of the love of Jesus for mankind, and the Sacrifice which gives adequate honor and glory to God and imparts peace and benediction to the faithful. Consider the words of sacred Scripture:

"On the first day of the Azymes, the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Where wilt thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the pasch? But Jesus said: Go ye into the city to a certain man, and say to him: The Master saith, My time is near at hand, with thee I make the pasch with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus appointed to them, and they prepared the pasch."[6] "And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer."[7] "And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke: and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat. This is My body. And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins."[8] "Do this for a commemoration of Me."[9] "For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until He come."[10]

[6]Matt. 26, 17-19. [7]Luke 22, 14-15. [8]Matt. 26, 26-28.
[9]Luke 22, 19. [10]I. Cor. 11, 26.

"And a hymn being said, they went out unto mount Olivet."[11]

And Jesus said: "Therefore doth the Father love Me: because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again."[12] "And bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha. Where they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it upon the cross. And the writing was: *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*"[13] "And Jesus crying with a loud voice, said: Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit. And saying this He gave up the ghost."[14]

"From the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to My name a clean oblation."[15] Unfortunately the sense of Malachy's words has been somewhat obscured by their translation. In the language of the prophet the word *Minchah,* which is translated by *a clean oblation,* was a fixed term used to designate the unbloody sacrifice of bread and wine, the sacrifice of peace and benediction prescribed by the law of Moses. Melchisedech, the king of Salem, offered this sacrifice for Abraham.[16] The Royal Prophet foretold that the Messias would offer it, saying: "The Lord hath sworn, and He

[11]Matt. 26, 30. [12]John 10, 17-18. [13]John 19, 17-19.
[14]Luke 23, 46. [15]Mal. 1, 11. [16]Gen. 14, 18.

will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech.'"[17] Besides applying His merits to the faithful in the Sacraments Jesus Christ enables them to pay God their innate debt of religion in a worthy manner by means of the Sacrifice of the Mass. He is thus "always living to make intercession for us,"[18] offering to His eternal Father "a clean oblation in every place from the rising of the sun even to the going down," as the prophet Malachy foretold.

The difference between these three phases of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is accidental. In substance they are one and the same for in each Jesus Christ offers Himself to His Father for mankind. The accidental difference between the three phases of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is, that at the Last Supper He was mortal, on Calvary He really died, and in the Mass He is immortal; that at the Last Supper and in the Mass the Sacrifice is unbloody, while it was bloody on Calvary; that at the Last Supper Jesus offered Himself directly, on Calvary He consummated His Sacrifice through the executioners, and in the Mass He offers Himself through the ministry of His priests; finally, at the Last Supper He offered Himself in a special manner for the Apostles, on Calvary for all mankind, and in the Mass He offers Himself for individual souls.

By His august Sacrifice Jesus Christ is preeminently our Mediator with the Father. His love prompts Him to reconcile us with God. In obedi-

[17]Ps. 109, 4. [18]Hebr. 7, 25.

ence to the will of His Father He sacrifices His humanity to give adequate honor and glory to God by superabundantly satisfying every claim God has on man as his Creator, Benefactor, Supreme Ruler, and Final End. According to St. Paul the formal element of this Sacrifice is the loving obedience with which Jesus Christ accomplishes the will of His heavenly Father. "For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of One, many shall be made just."[19] The material element of this Sacrifice, according to the same Apostle, is the immolation of the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ to the eternal Father in the name of mankind. "Christ hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness."[20]

The Priest.

As the mediator between man and God the priest offers the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass through Him who said, "Do this for a commemoration of Me."[21] Only "in Him, through Him, and with Him" can he give due honor and glory to God. Only in proportion as he lives and acts in subjection and union with Jesus Christ will he be a fit instrument which the great Mediator and High Priest will use to promote the glory of God and the welfare of souls. Thus, the priest preaches the word of God, but the Master gives the grace to live it; the priest absolves the repentant sinner, and the Good Shepherd ratifies his sentence in heaven; the priest governs the faithful, but

[19]Rom. 5, 19. [20]Eph. 5, 2. [21]Luke 22, 19.

Jesus governs him. In offering the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass the priest is even more intimately united with Jesus Christ. Here both unite in one and the same act of religion. The priest performs the material part by reciting the prayers and performing the ceremonies, and through his instrumentality Jesus Christ sacrifices Himself on our altar to give honor and glory to God even as He sacrificed Himself on Calvary through the instrumentality of His executioners.

To celebrate the holy mysteries in a worthy manner the priest must personally be a man of God, enter into the interior disposition of his High Priest, be imbued with the spirit of the Church, and perform whatever she prescribes for the celebration of this august Sacrifice.

Three qualities unite to make a priest a man of God: a lively faith, profound religious convictions, and eminent purity of life. Faith animates the just even as the soul animates the body. "The just man liveth by faith."[22] By the infusion of divine light and truth faith is the life of his intelligence; by the infusion of charity it is the life of his heart; and by the sanctification of his daily actions it is the life of his works. Faith enables the priest to be content with little, and to live an apostolic life. With this treasure the priest is rich, without it he is destitute of everything precious in the sight of God.

A life of faith develops a twofold conviction in the priest. It makes him realize that God is

[22]Rom. 1, 17.

everything, and that all creatures are nothing without Him. It prompts him to say to God with the Wise Man: "To know Thee is perfect justice; and to know Thy justice, and Thy power, is the root of immortality."[23] Faith enables the priest to comprehend the words of God to the Israelites: "See ye that I alone am,"[24] to enter into the spirit of the Church when she says: "whom the angels praise, the dominations adore, and before whom the powers of heaven tremble," and to join in the praise of the heavenly spirits when they sing: "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of His glory."[25]

In proportion as the priest is enlightened by faith is he also permeated with the conviction of the vanity of earthly things. This conviction fills him with a contempt for the world and an humble mistrust of self, and prompts him to approach God with reverence and love, to cling to Him in preference to all else, to grow in His knowledge and love, to contribute his mite to the glory of God, and to make Him known and loved by all mankind. Faith prompts the priest to direct his grateful love and veneration in a special manner towards the Blessed Sacrament, where God finds His delights to be with the children of men,[26] where Jesus Christ offers Himself daily through his ministry to the eternal Father, and where his soul is daily nourished with the Body and the Blood of his Lord and Savior.

Purity of life follows the profound convictions

[23]Wis. 15, 3. [24]Deut. 32, 39. [25]Is. 6, 3.
[26]Prov. 8, 31.

which faith impresses upon every sincere mind and willing heart. It is partly negative or free from sin, and partly positive or replete with good works. Man acquires negative purity of heart by cultivating a horror for everything displeasing to God, by exercising a constant watchfulness to check inclinations to pride, to selflove, and to self-will, and by eliciting frequent acts of sorrow for faults committed. Negative purity of heart develops a tender conscience, and renders the priest attentive to the inspirations of grace and the opportunities of doing good. His sincere determination to live for God alone prompts him to cultivate positive purity of heart by promoting the glory of God and the good of souls, by acting out of love for Jesus and Mary in all things, and by regulating the discharge of his duties by the holy will of God. In proportion to his fervor and generosity will the priest thus purify and renew this intention frequently, seek opportunities of doing good, and do the little good he can with great fidelity even to the minutest detail.

The interior disposition which the priest should learn from his High Priest is obedience and submission to God and His representatives in all his actions. Jesus Christ claimed obedience to be His daily bread, and revealed it in an heroic degree when He said in the garden of Gethsemani: "Father, not My will, but Thine be done."[27] In proportion as the priest has acquired purity of heart in the seminary and maintained it in the ministry, will he be able to enter into this spirit

[27] Luke 22, 42.

of his High Priest by making it his own, and by striving to communicate it to all the faithful, that they too may be "made conformable to the image of His son."[28] From the obedience of the Master the priest will learn how to prepare for a devout celebration of the Mass. At the moment of His Incarnation the Son of God offered Himself to His heavenly Father for the redemption of mankind, and began to prepare for the consummation of His Sacrifice. He referred to it as His hour, longed for it with an intense desire, and entered eagerly upon it, saying: "That the world may know, that I love the Father. Arise, let us go hence."[29] Thus must also the priest, who hopes to consummate the Sacrifice of Calvary anew in a worthy manner, offer himself as a victim to God for the salvation of mankind. Instead of regarding the Mass as an incident in his daily life, or as a necessary duty to be performed, the priest must consider it as the sublimest act of religion and the consummation of his priestly life. When he considers it in this light will he also cherish it as his hour by predilection, the hour in which through his ministry Jesus Christ offers Himself as "a clean oblation" to the heavenly Father. He will welcome it with interior recollection, enter upon it with fervent devotion, and perform the sacred mysteries in intimate union with Jesus Christ the High Priest of the New Testament.

Mother Church directs the piety and devotion of her priest in offering the Sacrifice of the Mass,

[28]Rom. 8, 29. [29]John 14, 31.

and enables him to realize, if he enters into her spirit, that he is indeed an *Alter Christus* renewing the sublime drama of Calvary in an unbloody manner. When she admitted him among the number of her clerics Mother Church clothed her priest in the cassock to signify that like Christ he should henceforth be dead to the world and live a life of penance, and put the Roman collar on him to impress on all that like St. Paul he is "the prisoner of Jesus Christ."[30] As he now enters the sacristy to vest for Mass she clothes him in garments that symbolize our Savior's suffering. The amice is the white veil with which Jesus was blindfolded in the court of Caiaphas. The alb is the robe of derision in which He was clothed by Herod. The cincture is the cord which bound Him to the pillar of the flagellation, and the maniple the cord that bound His hands. The stole is the rope that was put around the Savior's neck after He had been condemned to death, the chasuble the cross He carried to Calvary, and the birretta the crown of thorns that encircled His sacred brow.

After she has thus arrayed the priest in the garments of her Bridegroom, Mother Church conducts him to the altar to perform the sacred mysteries as

The Sacrifice of the New Law.

The priest blesses himself at the foot of the altar to indicate that he begins the adorable Sacrifice in the name of the Blessed Trinity, recites the

[30] Eph. 3, 1.

Judica to be delivered from the snares of Satan, confesses his sins, and implores mercy, light and help through the prayers of the faithful on earth and of the saints in heaven. *Dominus vobiscum,*[31] he salutes the congregation, and *Aufer a nobis,* implores pardon for his sins through the intercession of the saints whose relics repose on the altar.

The priest then recites the *Introit,* which expresses the longing of the Patriarchs for the Redeemer, the *Kyrie,* to invoke the blessing of God and of Jesus Christ in particular on his undertaking, the *Gloria,* in which he gives praise and thanks to God for the advent of the Savior in the words of the angels on Christmas morning, and recites the *Collects* or prayers for the faithful. He then reads the *Epistle* to prepare the hearers for the Sacrifice, prays for light, reads the *Gospel,* and recites the *Credo* as the response of the Church to the words of the Gospel.

At the *Offertory* the priest offers the bread and wine and the divine Victim by anticipation to the eternal Father for the entire Church. He then invokes the Holy Spirit to bless his Sacrifice and render it worthy of God, and washes the tips of his fingers to indicate the purity necessary for participating in the Sacrifice. With the *Suscipe* he again recommends his offering to God, and in the *Orate fratres* implores the people to pray that the Sacrifice may be acceptable to God. In the *Secret* he commends it to God through the suffer-

[31] Phil. 4, 23.

ing and death of the Savior and through the intercession of the saints, and invites the faithful by the *Preface* to thank God for these sublime mysteries by joining the angels and saints in the *Sanctus,* their hymn of praise and thanksgiving.[32]

The priest then recites the *Te igitur* to beg God to look with favor upon his Sacrifice, to guide the Church in general, the Pope and the Bishop in particular, recommends those persons in the *Memento* whom he wishes to share in a special manner in the Sacrifice, and recites the *Communicantes* to invoke the divine assistance through the merits of Christ and the intercession of the saints. He extends his hands over the *oblata* at the *Hanc igitur* to indicate that Christ has offered Himself as a propitiatory Victim in our place who have deserved death by our sins, and begs God to accept his Sacrifice on account of the prayers of the saints and in the name of the entire Church. At the *Quam Oblationem* the priest makes five crosses over the bread and wine, in memory of the five wounds of the Savior, to express that his Sacrifice and the Sacrifice of Calvary are one and the same, and prays that the Oblation of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ may be accomplished with many blessings, be acceptable to God and received by Him as worthy of His sanctity and as pleasing to His divine Majesty.

The priest then begins the *Consecration* with the *Qui pridie,* by recalling the scene enacted at the Last Supper, takes the bread, blesses it, bends

[32] See Is. 6, 3. Apoc. 4, 8.

down till he rests upon the altar to signify that he is acting the part of Jesus Christ Himself, and says: *"For this is My Body."* He genuflects in adoration with the angels, and raises the Sacred Host on high that the faithful may adore their Lord and Savior. He then in like manner takes the chalice of wine and says: *"For this is the Chalice of My Blood,"* genuflects in adoration before it, and elevates the Precious Blood for the adoration of the faithful. In the *Unde memores* the priest now offers the divine Victim to the eternal Father and begs Him to accept Him as the Victim of Calvary, who truly suffered and died for mankind. He enumerates the lesser sacrifices which God accepted in the Old Testament, presents his petition through Christ, the Angel of the New Testament, and begs to be filled with heavenly grace and benediction on account of his participation in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. In the *Memento* the priest then prays for the faithful departed, and in the *Nobis Quoque* begs that the faithful on earth may likewise be made partakers of the beatitude of the blessed through Christ our Lord, through whom we hope for every blessing, and through whom we give all honor and glory to God.

With the *Pater Noster* the priest begins his preparation for Holy Communion, begs for the remission of his sins through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, of the Apostles and all the saints in the *Libera nos,* and begs for peace and security through Jesus Christ. While presenting this latter petition the priest breaks the Host in

imitation of Christ's action at the Last Supper, and drops a particle of the Host into the Chalice to signify that our peace must be sealed by the Blood of Christ in Holy Communion. Striking his breast at the *Agnus Dei* he implores the Lamb of God to have mercy on him, and prays at the *Domine Jesu Christe* for the entire Church, and for pardon, peace and perseverance for himself. Taking the Sacred Host in his hands the priest says the *Domine non sum dignus* in the words of the Centurion, and having said the *Corpus tuum* receives Communion under the form of bread. Having said the *Quid retribuam* as thanksgiving in the words of king David, he recites *Sanguis Domini* and receives Communion under the form of wine. He prays that this Communion may be to him the means of life everlasting in the *Quod ore* and *Corpus et Sanguis,* makes a short thanksgiving in the *Postcommunion,* prays for grace to advance in virtue through Christ our Lord, blesses the faithful, reads the Gospel of the Incarnation over them, and retires to commune in silence with his Sacramental Lord.

To foster his piety and devotion Mother Church also teaches her priest how the Sacrifice of the Mass is

A Memorial of Christ's Passion and Death.

The priest begins Mass by praying at the foot of the altar even as Christ began His passion by praying in the garden of Gethsemani. He ascends and kisses the altar, while Jesus arose from His prayer and received the traitor's kiss from Judas.

The *Kyrie* represents the triple denial of Peter, the *Gloria,* the conversions effected during His public life by the Savior, and the movement of the priest to the Epistle and to the Gospel sides reminds us how Jesus was dragged before the tribunals of Annas and Caiaphas, of Pilate and Herod. The uncovering of the chalice represents Jesus stripped of His garments, bound to a pillar, and cruelly scourged. The *Lavabo* represents Pilate washing his hands before the multitude and saying: "I am innocent of the blood of this just One." At the *Orate fratres* he presents Jesus to the people and says: "Ecce Homo." The *Secret* reminds us of the silence which Jesus observed during His passion, and the *Preface* the cry of the multitude: "Away with Him: Crucify Him," as they hurried Jesus forth to execution. The low solemn tone of the *Canon* represents the mourning and consternation which seized upon all nature at the sufferings of Jesus Christ. The words of *Consecration* are the nails which fasten Him to the cross, and the *Elevation* is the erection of the cross of Christ on Calvary. The *Pater Noster* represents the Seven Last Words of Jesus on the cross, and the *Agnus Dei* the profession of the Centurion: "Indeed this was the Son of God"[33] when he pierced the Savior's side with a lance. The *Communion* represents the taking down of the Body of the Savior and the burial. The *covering of the chalice* reminds us of how Joseph of Arimathea closed the tomb of Jesus with a stone, the *Postcommunion,* how Jesus rose

[33]Matt. 27, 54.

from the dead, appeared to His disciples, and gave them His final instructions. The *Blessing* represents the parting benediction of our Lord as He ascended into heaven, the *Last Gospel*, the expectation of the Holy Ghost by the disciples of our Lord, and the departure of the priest from the altar, the setting out of the Apostles to preach the glad tidings of salvation to the world.

As the Sacrifice of the Mass is the sublimest act of religion the ceremonies that enter into it are often as important as the words in which the sublime mysteries are expressed. According to the interior fervor of the priest and his external grace of action he will therefore manifest his piety and devotion by paying equal attention to the literal and the mystic significations of the words and ceremonies of the holy Sacrifice. He will be neither too precipitate nor too slow in his actions, and will always guard against making mistakes by reading the Canon of the Mass and never recite it by heart.

The principal ceremonies are defined in the Missal. Others have been added by decrees of the Congregation of Rites, and minor ones are explanations of the rubricians. The priest who is desirous of offering the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass with all piety and devotion, must know the rubrics well. He should not ask himself whether this or that ceremony must be performed under pain of sin, but should strive to observe scrupulously the *ceremonial* approved for his country. Even after he has applied himself for a lifetime

to fathom the mysteries of this Sacrifice, and to offer it with all possible reverence and edification, will he make many minor mistakes and often have reason to recall the words which Jesus addressed to His Apostles: "When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants."[34]

[34]Luke 17, 10.

4. THE DIVINE OFFICE.

Jesus Christ.

Man must submit his mind and heart to the influence of grace by prayer to cultivate union with God through faith, hope, and charity. Since sin darkened the mind, weakened the will, and inclined his nature to evil, prayer is doubly necessary for the salvation of man. On this account the practice of daily prayer comes down to us from our First Parents, and is strongly inculcated in the Scriptures. Besides the personal prayers which devout persons offered up in olden times, the Patriarchs prayed for their families, and the Jewish priests were bound by the law of Moses to pray for all the children of Abraham.

It remained, however, for our Mediator Jesus Christ, the true "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world,"[1] to pray as High Priest of the New Testament for the consummation of His own glory, for the sanctification of His Apostles, and for the temporal and eternal welfare of all mankind down to the end of time. When about to consummate His sacrifice for the redemption of mankind, this High Priest raised His eyes to heaven and said:

"Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. As thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him."[2] To at-

[1]John 1 29. [2]John 17, 1-2.

tain to life eternal they must acknowledge Thee as the one true God and believe in Jesus as Thy anointed one.

I have glorified Thee on earth by fulfilling the mission with which Thou hast entrusted Me. And now, dear Father, do Thou glorify Me by imparting to My human nature that glory which in union with Thee I have always possessed as God before the world was made.

I have made known Thy perfections and taught Thy doctrine to the men whom Thou hast taken out of the world and given to Me. They were Thine and Thou hast given them to Me as disciples; and they have kept Thy word which I have made known to them. Now they know that all things which Thou hast given Me are from Thee, for I have given them the message which Thou didst give Me to deliver; and they have received it and believe that Thou didst send Me. I pray for them, at present I pray not for the world but for the disciples whom Thou hast given Me, because they are Thine; even as all things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them who believe in Me.

Presently I shall finish My earthly course, but they will remain on earth, while I shall ascend to Thee in heaven. Holy Father, after I have departed from this life, do Thou keep them faithful to Thee, whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one even as We are one. While I was with them I kept them faithful to Thy name. I shielded

those from harm whom Thou hast given to Me, so that none of them was lost with the exception of Judas, who was lost through his own fault as the Scriptures had foretold. But now that I am about to come to Thee, I say these things while I am yet on earth, that they may rejoice in Me and I in them. I have given them Thy commission; still a perverse world hates them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not pray Thee to take them out of the world by death, but to protect them against the enmity of the world. Sanctify them that they may preach the truth and deliver Thy message to mankind; for as Thou hast sent Me into the world so I also have sent them, and I have sacrificed Myself for them that they may spend their lives in professing and preaching the truth.

And not only for these My disciples do I pray, but also for those who will be brought to believe in Me through their preaching, that all may be of one mind and heart and live in concord and submission, even as Thou, dear Father, abidest in Me and I in Thee, so that the world may be convinced by this admirable unity of My Church that Thou hast sent Me.

And the perfection which Thou hast given Me by nature I have communicated to them by sanctifying grace and by the Sacrament of My Body and Blood, that they may be one, even as We are one, that I may abide in them and Thou in Me, and that by means of this union they may attain to perfection. Thus the world may know that Thou hast

sent Me, and hast loved them even as Thou hast loved me. Dear Father, I desire that those whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me in heaven that they may see the glory of My divinity, which Thou didst bestow upon Me before the creation of the world because Thou hast loved Me from all eternity. Just Father, Thou repayest every one according to his works. The world does not acknowledge and serve Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou didst send Me. I have made known Thy name, Thy perfections, and Thy doctrine, and will still make Thee known that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may abide in them as a reward of their fidelity, and I may abide in them by charity and the continual assistance of My grace.

The Priest.

In apostolic days "the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul."[3] They were so absorbed in seeking "first the kingdom of God, and His justice"[4] that they even held their material possessions in common. Prompted by their fervor they assembled at stated hours of the day to thank and to praise God, and in imitation of their High Priest to pray for themselves and for the welfare of the entire Church. In the beginning they followed the traditional practice of the synagogue and chanted psalms and read from the Law and the Prophets. As time went on they also used the writings of the New Testament, the Acts

[3]Acts 4, 32. [4]Matt. 6, 33.

of the Martyrs, and the writings of the Fathers of the Church in these public devotions.

The Persecutions broke up these public devotions of the Church to a great extent, while the Barbarian Invasions threatened to destroy both the remnants of the Church and even all civilization. During these trying times priests and monks kept up the prayers in the name of the Church as their special right and duty, and called this exercise *the Divine Office.* Thus, with the lapse of time, custom divided the natural obligations of religion in such a way between priests and people, that the former prayed and sang the divine praises in the name of the universal Church, while the latter contributed the material means necessary for the services of religion.

The various writings that enter into the Divine Office were gathered into a compendium at an early date and called *the Breviary.* With the lapse of time many corrections, additions, and revisions have been made in the breviary, but it owes its present form and contents specially to the zealous efforts of St. Pius V and to Pope Pius X. The Divine Office is divided into sections, called *Hours* from the fact that the early monks performed these devotions at certain fixed hours according to the ancient Roman division of the day. *Matins* was the official morning prayer, and was followed by *Lauds* as a preparation for the Sacrifice of the Mass. *Prime, Tierce, Sext,* and *None* were recited in choir before dinner, while *Vespers* were sung in the afternoon, and *Compline* served as the night prayers of the community.

As the Divine Office is the official prayer of the Church, the priest acts as much in the name of the Church when he recites it as he acts in the name of Jesus Christ when offering up the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass. When the Israelites murmured against God the prayer of Moses averted His anger.[5] When the enemies of Israel leagued against them the prayer of Josue induced the Lord of hosts to fight on their side.[6] The prayer of the Church is more influential than the prayer of Moses, more efficacious than the prayer of Josue. When her children provoke the anger of God mother Church looks to the prayer of her priests to avert it; when they are in danger of succumbing in the battle of life she expects her priests to influence God to fight on their side. Will God, can God turn a deaf ear to thousands of His priests supplicating His aid by means of the Divine Office? Even though their personal efforts be defective, their united prayer in the name of the Spouse of Jesus Christ will always be seconded by His own petition. On this account the official prayer of the Church, even when offered up by the least of her priests, will find favor with the Lord.

Besides the motive of personal sanctification and the desire of promoting the welfare of the Church the priest has other incentives to recite the Divine Office well. In general he is related by nature and grace to all mankind, but he is personally a spiritual Father and should have the

[5]Num. 14. [6]Jos. 10.

interest of his spiritual children at heart. He begets them in Baptism, watches over them and nourishes them by preaching the word of God and administering the Sacraments to them. But this is only a part of his duty. His paternal solicitude should promote their progress in virtue, and their temporal and eternal happiness. As holy Job sanctified his children daily, saying: "Lest perhaps my sons have sinned, and have blessed God in their hearts,"[7] so every priest should pray daily that his sacred ministry may be a lasting channel of grace for all his spiritual children.

On account of the importance of the Divine Office to her spiritual life, mother Church considers the priest grievously negligent who through his own fault would omit a nocturn of matins or any one of the other hours. She insists that he recite the Divine Office even as she urges him to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass in a worthy, attentive, and devout manner. "*Digne, attente, et devote*" are the words she uses in both instances.

To make his recitation of the Divine Office worthy of God and of His Church the priest must *esteem* and *love* it, recite it at the most *suitable time,* and with the greatest possible recollection. To esteem and love the Divine Office the priest must understand the place it occupies in the economy of our sanctification, and as far as possible know the meaning of every part of it. "I do not assert," remarks St. Alphonsus, "that the priest is obliged to study and to understand the meaning of all the obscure passages in the breviary, but I

[7] Job 1, 5.

do say that such a study is one of the most devout and useful that can occupy the priest."

Next to the Sacrifice of the Mass the Divine Office is the most important act of the priest as mediator between man and God. In deciding on the hour for the Mass he must consult the convenience and devotion of the people, but in selecting the time for the recitation of the Divine Office the priest should consider primarily the sacredness of the function. Less important duties may at times be more imperative and so interfere with his plan. However, if through laziness he were to put off the recitation of the Divine Office till a late hour of the night, he could hardly consider himself an Alter Christus, for he would then be actuated more by the animal man than by love for mother Church, even though he were still mentally and physically able to fulfil his obligation.

As Jesus Christ our Model and High Priest prayed for Himself and His disciples when trials were imminent, so the priest as mediator and representative of the Church should devote the first leisure time of the day to the Divine Office so that both he and the faithful may derive strength from it for the trials of the day. This was the practice in early ages and is still the rule in monasteries when the Divine Office is said in choir. Besides, by granting the privilege of anticipating, but never of postponing the Office of the day, mother Church expresses her solicitude of having this exercise performed as early in the day as possible. Hence, the rule, "a pious morn-

ing, a busy day, and a pleasant evening," is both practical and religious. In fact this other rule, "*Nunc dimittis* before the morning paper, and *Sacrosanctae* before evening pleasure," is more in harmony with the spirit of the Church than the practice of starting with *Aperi, Domine,* after the rest of the day's work has been done.

Three things contribute to the recitation of the Divine Office with recollection: leisure, faith in the presence of God, and a sincere conviction of the importance of the Office itself. On the other hand three things also dispose us for distractions in prayer: preoccupation of mind, slothful posture of body, and precipitation in prayer. Involuntary distractions arise from the fact that "the elevation of the mind to God in prayer has a depressing effect on the infirmity of human nature," says St. Thomas, "so that in tending to regain its equilibrium it distracts the mind and heart." On this account God overlooks distractions that are not voluntary in their cause, and takes pleasure in a prayer that is imperfect on account of the infirmity of human nature. To recite the Divine Office with all possible recollection the priest should listen to the advice of the Holy Ghost, who says: "Before prayer prepare thy soul: and be not as a man that tempteth God,"[8] and seek to maintain this recollection by his attention and devotion throughout the exercise.

The priest should bestow a threefold attention to the recitation of the Divine Office. It is his

[8]Eccli. 18, 23.

privilege to represent the Church militant before the throne of God, to join the Church triumphant in praising God, and to conform to His adorable will with the Church suffering. He should therefore be attentive to his own unworthiness for this sublime function, to the infinite majesty, goodness and mercy of God, who called him to mediate in the name of the Church, and to the message he has to present in the name of countless souls redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. By thus concentrating his energies on the duty to be performed the priest will have no difficulty in pronouncing the words correctly nor in entering into the spirit of the prayer. Without this concentration recollection of mind will fade away and devotion will be impossible. Of old God complained of a want of attention in the prayers of His people when He said: "This people honoureth Me with their lips: but their heart is far from Me."[9]

Finally, the priest should recite the Divine Office with devotion, with fervor, or affection. As St. Thomas teaches, reverence and attention to prayer naturally culminate in devotion. Devotion is the most important quality in reciting the Divine Office well, for St. Augustine maintains that the efficacy of a prayer depends more on the fervor with which it is uttered than on the words in which it is expressed. As a rule we may therefore say that the devotion of the priest in reciting the Divine Office will grow in proportion as he esteems and loves it, and in proportion to the effort he

[9]Matt. 15, 8.

makes in performing this act of religion conscientiously.

The priest's devotion will also find much nourishment in the Divine Office itself. For if all prayers approved by the Church safeguard and stimulate piety and devotion, those inspired by the Holy Ghost ought to stimulate true devotion in a special manner. Now, with the exception of the hymns, the lives of the saints, and the homilies on the Gospels, the Divine Office is taken entirely from Sacred Scripture. It is arranged in such a way that the priest will recite the Psalms once a week and review the whole Bible once a year. What then could be more touching than the sentiments of faith, of confidence, of repentance, of love, and of thanksgiving, met with in the daily recitation of the Divine Office? What instructions more replete with unction? What lives more encouraging to the priest than those of the saints he finds in his breviary? What could be more captivating than the Offices of our Lord and His blessed Mother? On Judgment Day some nuns may excuse their want of devotion in reciting the Divine Office by pleading ignorance of the language in which it is recited. But if the priest neglects to derive profit from this treasury of piety and devotion he may be censured more severely on the day of reckoning than the servant who buried his Master's talent.[10]

[10]Matt. 25, 25.

5. PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Jesus Christ.

The complex nature of man prompts him to express his interior sentiments in appropriate external action. Wherefore St. Thomas teaches that man should pay God a twofold adoration: the interior devotion of the soul, and the external expression of his faith, hope and charity by divine worship. To encourage man in worshipping Him, and to safeguard his religion against superstition and irreligion, God has always prescribed how He wishes to be worshipped. He did this especially when He gathered the Israelites into a nation. Through Moses God then ordained a national clergy, established a national temple, and prescribed an elaborate ceremonial law according to which His chosen people were to worship Him daily but especially on the Sabbath and on other holy days designated by Him.

As Mediator between man and God Jesus Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil the law and the prophets.[1] He took part in the public worship in the synagogue on the Sabbath, visited the temple in Jerusalem on the days appointed by the law, and took part in the services whenever He remained in the city. During His public ministry Jesus frequently explained the law and the prophets in the synagogue on the Sabbath and freed them from the narrow interpretation of the

[1]Matt. 5, 17.

Pharisees. He manifested so great zeal for the house of God when in Jerusalem[2] that on two occasions He indignantly drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, saying: "My house is the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves."[3]

When Jesus Christ founded His Church He intended her to aid all of good will to serve God and attain life everlasting. As He had predicted, she was not to be confined to a single nation but to spread out over the entire world. Being essentially Catholic or universal He did not hamper this Church with a ceremonial law suited only to a particular age or nation. In His wisdom Jesus Christ defined only what is essential to the Sacrifice of the New Law and the administration of His Sacraments, and then gave His Church full authority to safeguard the purity of her faith and practice in her public worship by a ceremonial law which she could adapt to the vicissitudes of time, place, and civilization. "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth,"[4] He said to His Apostles, "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you."[5]

The Church has wisely used her right to regulate and develop the public worship of her children. In the beginning when her members were converts from Judaism she retained much of the ceremonial law of Moses. With her rapid extension among the nations of the world, however, she gradually framed a ceremonial law of her own. In the development of this law she has striven to

[2]Ps. 68, 10. [3]Luke 19, 46. [4]Matt. 28, 18.
[5]John 20, 21.

safeguard Catholic faith and practice and to foster solid piety and devotion in her members. Uniformity in public worship enables her to impress the mark of Catholicity on all her members and to unite them in daily life by the bonds of faith, hope, and charity.

The Priest.

As mediator between man and God it is the duty of the priest to observe the ceremonial law of the Church, and by his word and example to teach the faithful to esteem and cherish it that its observance may render their worship acceptable to God. The fundamental principle which forms the basis of all the ceremonies of the Church, and which is the standard of all acts of religion, prescribes that in worshipping God, whether in private or in public, we do so in a worthy, attentive, and devout manner, that thereby we may find favor with the Lord. It is the greatest honor for man to be permitted to treat with God as his Father, with Jesus Christ as his Elder Brother, with Mary as his spiritual Mother, and with the angels and saints as his brethren. In contemplating this dignity conferred upon him by the goodness and mercy of God man should not be unmindful of the majesty of God on the one hand, and of his personal helplessness on the other when he renders God the service of religion. It is true that of himself man can never worship God in an adequate manner. But when he gives God the best he is and has, and does this by reverently associating himself with Jesus, Mary, the angels and saints, he renders his worship acceptable to God.

As the faithful mediator between man and God it is not sufficient for the priest to preside at the public worship of the congregation. "No one shall appear with his hands empty before the Lord: But every one shall offer according to what he hath, according to the blessing of the Lord his God, which He shall give him."[6] A priest who has not the care of souls offers "according to what he hath" by giving himself to God in union with Jesus Christ. But he who is working for souls must strive to bring those souls to God, particularly during the public worship. His zeal should extend to the house of God, regulate his personal actions during the divine service, and induce the faithful to assist in a worthy, attentive, and devout manner.

Though the Savior was born in a stable it would indicate a lamentable want of appreciation on the part of man if he were to content himself to worship God in a stable while his means could afford a more suitable house of God. The means of the parishioners may be inadequate to erect and maintain a costly temple, but the zeal of the pastor should suffice to keep the house of God neat and clean and decorated in a way to inspire devotion. The parish may not be able to furnish vestments of fine silk and sacred vessels of gold and silver, but the zeal of the pastor can find a way to keep the vestments in repair, the altar linen washed, and the sacred vessels gilded on the inside as the law prescribes.

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[6]Duet. 16, 16-17.

The priest is bound in conscience to carry out the liturgical services as defined by the Church. To be ignorant of the rubrics would indicate a lack of zeal, and to carry them out in a negligent or slovenly manner would manifest a want of devotion and give scandal to the faithful. To talk during the public services would be more reprehensible in the clergy than in the laity. And to manifest irritation at the altar would be entirely unworthy of a priest of God. If the pastor is to exercise a salutary influence on his flock his conduct during divine service ought to inspire the worshippers with reverence, recollection, and devotion. Without exercising this influence he fails to qualify as their mediator in the estimation of the people, for they naturally expect that he should go before them by his example, and not merely be the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

In proportion to his zeal for the glory of God will a pastor find time and have the patience to teach the altar-boys their prayers and drill them in serving at the altar. For the more solemn festivals of the year he should endeavor to have as many well trained boys and young men in the sanctuary as circumstances will permit. When the fact is brought home to parents that the servers represent the congregation at the altar and take an intimate part in the public worship, they will be anxious to see their sons serve the priest and will find their personal interest and devotion stimulated by seeing them take an active part in the divine services. Formerly only clerics were permitted thus to participate in the public wor-

ship of the Church. At present the erroneous idea has been quite generally accepted that only small boys should assist the priest in the sanctuary. The truth is that if the Church had her choice only clerics would take an active part in her public worship. She wants the men, young and old, in the sanctuary, and she will content herself with the assistance of the boys only until she can have the former. The sooner this delusion is dispelled and the men of the parish can be induced to take an active part in the divine services, at least on the more solemn occasions, the deeper will faith take root in the hearts of the people and enhance the public worship of God in our churches.

The celebration of the feasts of the Church with all possible solemnity is another means by which the pastor should draw his flock to God and enable them to live in union with Jesus, Mary and the angels and saints. The ecclesiastical year unfolds the life of our divine Savior and His Church like a grand panorama before our minds. During Advent the Church prepares us for the spiritual birth of the Saviour in our hearts by reminding us of the preparation of the world for the long-expected Messias. From Christmas to the Octave of the Epiphany she associates us with Jesus in His infancy and hidden life. In rapid succession she then places before us our Savior in His public life, in His suffering and death, and in His glorious resurrection and ascension, and the mission of the Holy Ghost. With the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday mother Church directs our attention to herself and

encourages us by the variety of the saints she honors from then unto the end of the ecclesiastical year to be close imitators of Jesus and Mary, even as these have been, that on the Last Day we may be found on the right side of Jesus Christ when He will come to judge the living and the dead.

A minor feature about the public worship of every congregation that exercises a marked influence on the attendance and devotion of the faithful is the hour and the duration of the services. Being called by God from the people and ordained for the people, the priest should adapt the hour for public worship to the convenience of the people. He should also give an example of punctuality and regularity by beginning the services at the time specified. By waiting for stragglers he increases their number, detains the good people who come in time, and may force those who have urgent business on hand to miss Mass. As a rule the services should not be protracted much over an hour. An hour spent in recollection and devotion at divine worship gives more honor to God, and is more profitable to man, than two hours spent in drowsiness and distraction. In ages gone by when persons were more phlegmatic and did everything more leisurely it may have been possible for them to assist for hours at divine worship without becoming inattentive. As reaction sets in earlier in this age of nervous tension we must beware of wearying the faithful by protracting the services unreasonably if we wish to aid them in cultivating a relish for true devotion.

Another means of cultivating a spirit of regu-

larity and devotion in every parish is to publish the coming events sufficiently in advance. These announcements should mention the feasts and fasts of the week, the banns of marriages to be contracted, the hours at which confessions will be heard and services held, the intentions for which the Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered, and any other item of general interest to the parish. These announcements should be recorded in a book and kept for future reference, that they may serve the pastor as a guide in maintaining a uniform practice in regard to the hours and the solemnity of the public worship in the parish.

In the interest of good order, charity, and religion the pastor should abstain from all criticism, especially from such as might be regarded as personal, while conducting the divine services. Mankind is not perfect, it is true, but it is equally true that no one has ever been drawn to God by public criticism and condemnation. If some persons come late habitually or otherwise deserve a correction it will be wiser to embody a general admonition in the announcements, and if necessary to admonish the offenders privately, than to offend the innocent and the guilty alike by a public denunciation.

Many pastors find that another means of fostering recollection, attention and devotion during divine services, especially in rural parishes, is to provide a Mother's Room. This room should be located in a part of the building from which the altar is visible, so that the mothers may assist at Mass in it while caring for their children. Mothers

occupy a very important place in God's plan and should be given every encouragement in the practice of their religion and their family duties, so that they may make the necessary sacrifices to be the visible guardian angels of the home, and to instil piety and devotion into their children at an early age.

Music has always been an important part of divine worship. Like other ceremonies, the singing is intended to raise the minds and hearts of the worshippers to God, to concentrate their attention on the services, and to stimulate their piety and devotion. In early ages clerics formed the choir and chanted the responses at holy Mass. Later on congregational singing was introduced in many localities. Plain chant was the music of the Church. On account of the difficulty of teaching plain chant in modern times, however, figured music threatened to supplant it during the past century. The principal objections raised against figured music are that it introduces a sensational element into the divine services which often attracts the attention of the worshippers to the singers instead of raising their minds and hearts to God, and that it often interrupts and protracts the divine service unreasonably. To remedy these abuses Pope Pius X restored plain chant to its place of honor, and imposed the obligation on all pastors of fostering its use in the liturgical services of the Church.

Finally, to stimulate the piety and devotion of the faithful while attending public worship the

pastor should not content himself with insisting that they use their prayer-books or beads. He should frequently inculcate the necessity of piety and devotion in private life and occasionally explain the nature and advantages of public worship in the Church. The literal and the mystical significations of the Mass are by no means self-evident to the people. To save them bewilderment and discouragement and to foster their devotion the ceremonies and prayers of the Mass should be explained to them. They must be taught its nature and excellence before they can appreciate it as the holiest act of religion. They must be taught that Vespers, or the singing of the Divine Praises, is an important act of religion, before they will make the effort necessary to attend. And they must appreciate the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament before they will prostrate themselves and exclaim with Thomas, when he ceased to be the doubting Apostle: "My Lord, and my God."[7]

[7] John 20, 28.

IV.

THE MEDIATION IN THE NAME OF GOD.

1. THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Jesus Christ.

Of all the parables spoken by the Savior the one dearest to His Sacred Heart is evidently that of the Good Shepherd. In this parable He reveals God's boundless mercy to mankind and proposes Himself to His priests as the Model Pastor of souls. "I am the good shepherd," He says. "The good shepherd giveth His life for his sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth: and the wolf catcheth, and scattereth the sheep: And the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know Mine, and Mine know Me. As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for My sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."[1]

Jesus made every human effort to get in touch with the lost sheep of the house of Israel.[2] He preached to them in the synagogue and in the market-place. He journeyed repeatedly through the country and sought them out in the highways and the hedges. Not content with His own personal efforts Jesus sent His twelve Apostles and seventy-two disciples to prepare the people for

[1]John 10, 11-16. [2]Matt. 10, 6.

His preaching even as John the Baptist had prepared them for His public appearance. To all who entered His sacred presence He revealed Himself no less by His charity and works of mercy than by His preaching and miracles. To the humble and sincere He became at once both light and truth, inspiration and life, the way and the guide to supernal happiness.

The meekness and humility of the Good Shepherd presented a striking contrast to the proud and vindictive spirit of the Pharisees. They obscured the truths of revelation by their rationalism. He appeared as the Incarnate Word of God and spoke "as one having power."[3] They repelled the people by their haughtiness and discouraged them by their severity. He attracted them by His simplicity and kindness and made them realize that His yoke is sweet and His burden light.[4] They were the blind leading the blind,[5] for they strayed away from the narrow way that leads to life eternal[6] in their pursuit of worldly splendor, while He had nothing in common with the world, but possessed the treasures of wisdom and grace in common with His Father in heaven.

As the Good Shepherd, Jesus fed His flock on the wholesome pasture of truth and grace, not on the sophistry of the Scribes nor on the husks which the Prodigal would have eaten when he was reduced to want. Instead of extolling Himself like the Pharisees He lowered Himself, the Eternal Truth, to the comprehension of His audience, and

[3]Matt. 7, 29. [4]Matt. 11, 30. [5]Luke 6, 39.
[6]Matt. 7, 14.

communicated His divine life to all of good will that He might raise them up and impart to them the dignity of children of God. And He taught man to seek his happiness not in what might appeal to the senses or flatter human pride, but in that selfdenial and that conformity to the will of His heavenly Father through charity which would unite him intimately to God and secure for him an endless fruition of an Infinite Good.

As the Good Shepherd Jesus likewise protected His followers against the enemies of salvation. He taught them that the flesh lusteth against the spirit,[7] and that the world has nothing in common with Him.[8] He warned them to watch and pray lest they enter into temptation,[9] and assured them that His father in heaven, who cared for the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, would add all things else unto them if they sought first the kingdom of God and His justice.[10] As the life of man on earth is like "a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away,"[11] Jesus taught man by word and example to "work whilst it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."[12] He warned all not to fear them "that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell."[13] "If the world hate you, know ye, that it hath hated Me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but

[7]Gal. 5, 17. [8]John 17, 16. [9]Matt. 26, 41.
[10]Matt. 6, 33. [11]James 4, 15. [12]John 9, 4.
[13]Matt. 10, 28.

I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."[14] When the Pharisees sought to counteract his influence Jesus denounced them as ravenous wolves, and as "whited sepulchres which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness."[15] He urged all to do violence to themselves to enter the kingdom of heaven, and to take up their daily cross and follow Him.

In the parable of the Lost Sheep, Jesus illustrates His zeal for the conversion of sinners. "What think you?" He asks, "If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray; doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains, and go to seek that which is gone astray? And if it so be that he find it: Amen I say to you, he rejoiceth more for that, than for the ninety-nine that went not astray."[16] In practice the Good Shepherd devoted special attention to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. When He was accused of being the friend of sinners He justified Himself by saying: "They that are whole need not the physician: but they that are sick. I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance."[17] In fact the most touching scenes in the Gospel narrative all portray the Good Shepherd reclaiming His lost sheep. At one time we find Him seated at the well of Jacob waiting to convert the outcast of the Samaritan women. Again we see Him at the table of Simon the Pharisee defending Mary Magdalen. In a third scene we find Him dining with sinners and

[14]John 15, 18. [15]Matt. 23, 27. [16]Matt. 18, 12.
[17]Luke 5, 31-32.

publicans in the home of Levi, and in a fourth as publicly defending in the temple the woman taken in adultery. In truth the central figure of the entire Gospel narrative is the Good Shepherd. The Evangelists in developing the picture of this Pastor seem to vie with one another in presenting minute details that are calculated to impress His loving mercy and solicitude indelibly on our minds and hearts.

The closing scene of the Good Shepherd's life is filled with special pathos. Unlike the devoted shepherd who lost his life in defending his flock against the attack of wild beasts, Jesus sacrificed His life in the pursuit of His lost sheep. Two elements combine in the development of this drama, the malice of man and the love of the God-Man. While pursuing the lost sheep of the house of Israel with His love, the Good Shepherd permits Himself to be overwhelmed by the contempt and ingratitude of mankind, to be mocked, reviled and spat upon, to be scourged, crowned with thorns, and crucified. And from the moment He surrendered Himself into the power of His enemies He was "dumb as a lamb before his shearer,"[18] and even prayed with His dying breath: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[19]

The Priest.

To be an Alter Christus every priest must make a specialty of cultivating those virtues that adorned the life of the Good Shepherd. If he is to possess his soul in patience and devote his life

[18]Is. 53, 7. [19]Luke 23, 34.

to the sanctification of mankind he must have learned from his Master to be "meek and humble of heart."[20] If he is to guide souls on the narrow way he must be "wise as serpents and simple as doves."[21] If he is to protect souls from danger he must watch and pray that he enter not into temptation, lest after having preached to others he himself may become a castaway. Finally, to promote the glory of God and the welfare of mankind he must have the love of God in his heart, be absorbed in his Father's business, and be actuated with the Master's zeal for souls. In proportion as a priest is actuated by the concupiscence of the eyes, by the concupiscence of the flesh, or by the pride of life does he become that hireling who seeks to promote his material interest in the sacred ministry, who says "cui bono?" when there is question of promoting the spiritual interests of his flock, and who fears the criticism of the world more than he does the judgment of God.

In addition to the spirit of the Good Shepherd the priest must have a thorough knowledge of the proper pasture for his flock as well as a discriminating judgment in selecting the food suitable for each member. In proportion as he realizes the responsibility of his office will he be both conservative and progressive in the discharge of his duties. He will be conservative in detecting and eradicating the very shadow of danger to faith and morals, but alert and progressive in applying the most approved methods in the Church to the care of his flock. Without a thorough knowledge of the

[20]Matt. 11, 29. [21]Matt. 10, 16.

priestly studies he would be, like the blind leading the blind, ever in danger of falling by the wayside himself, and without a practical judgment he would be no safe guide for the members of his flock. After leaving the seminary he must therefore maintain the former by cultivating a habit of study and acquire the latter by selfdiscipline, observation and prayer.

The third qualification of a good pastor is to understand human nature, or to know men. Even though He was God Jesus Christ did not neglect to advance "in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men."[22] If the candidate for Holy Orders was sincere with himself and God in the seminary he learned something of human nature by his self-examination. But it would be folly for him to imagine on entering the sacred ministry that he could not profit by the advice of his elders, or had nothing to learn by experience, for he would soon prove the truth of that saying of the Book of Proverbs that "the promotion of fools is disgrace."[23] To be a good shepherd the priest must be prudent in the ministry and consult God and his elders especially in disposing of difficult matters. In an unforeseen emergency, however, he will act with moderation if he observes the Golden Rule and does as he would like to be treated in a similar case.

As a necessary condition in laboring efficaciously for the souls confided to his care the priest should be able to say with His divine Model: "I know Mine, and Mine know Me."[24] At the sacrifice of

[22]Luke 2, 52. [23]Prov. 3, 35. [24]John 10, 14.

many personal considerations he must get in touch with, and acquire a personal knowledge of every soul he hopes to benefit by his ministry. The Good Shepherd did not wait in His study for the members of His flock to seek Him. He went in search of the Lost Sheep. The priest must do the same. He must take the initiative in forming the acquaintance of the members of his flock as well as in learning their individual needs. An initiatory, affable, and courteous manner in the discharge of his duties is required in the priest by the nature of his office as pastor of souls.

The pastor must take the circumstances of the congregation into consideration in forming the acquaintance and in cementing the bonds of friendship with the members of his flock. In taking possession of his parish he should beware of vicious persons presenting him in a false light, and of selfish characters using him to further their personal aims. He will act wisely if he seeks to make a favorable impression through the teachers on the children, through the church committee on the men, and through the officers of the various sodalities on their respective members. He should never take sides in any contention that may arise in the parish, and beware of making a confidant of any parishioner. As shepherd of his flock he should be the impartial, disinterested friend of every member of his parish, seek counsel from his clerical brethren, and give his confidence to his legitimate superiors and spiritual director.

A zealous pastor will avoid two extremes in his parochial labors. He will not permit his duties

in church and school to absorb all his time so that he will be prevented from making any parochial visits, and he will not permit his pastoral visitation to deteriorate into mere recreation or particular friendships. By concentrating all his efforts at home he would neglect the ignorant and indifferent and permit them to drift away from the Church. And by using his office as a means of personal dissipation he would give positive scandal and destroy his usefulness in the parish. The Good Shepherd warned the faithful of His day against such pastors when He said: "All things whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works do ye not; for they say, and do not."[25]

Much indeed can be accomplished by conducting divine services with all possible solemnity, by preaching sound, practical sermons, by being devoted to the confessional, and by taking a special interest in the education of the children and the upbuilding of parochial societies. But it is also the duty of every one who has the care of souls to visit the sick, to reclaim the sinner, and to constrain the negligent to practise their religion. "These things you ought to have done, and not to leave those undone."[26] According to the teaching and example of our divine Master, to "go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in"[27] is in a special manner the work of the Good Shepherd.

In the upbuilding of a parish a systematic, pastoral visitation produces a salutary effect that

[25]Matt. 23, 3. [26]Matt. 23, 23. [27]Luke 14, 23.

cannot be accomplished by any other means. Every pastor of experience knows that many negligent Catholics, who were "found out" by a zealous pastor on his annual visitation, became quite exemplary members of his flock, though they were never recognized at the Christmas or Easter solemnities, and perhaps not even attracted by the exercises of a mission. And what shall be said of the marriages validated, of the children won for the Catholic school and of new members for the sodalities on this visitation? Or who can estimate the good accomplished by saving souls from the occasion of sin, by strengthening them against temptation, and by performing the other works of mercy by the pastor as the representative of Jesus Christ?

Even in a well established parish pastoral visitations do more than maintain a spirit of regularity and fervor. They foster that missionary spirit in a parish which makes every member an active assistant of the pastor. It develops a representative body of men and women who let their light shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify the heavenly Father[28] by seeking the truth and by following their example. Thus pastoral visits are a source of heavenly benediction for the devoted members of the flock, serve as a pretext for the pastor to stimulate the negligent in the practice of their religion, and bring him into contact with well disposed non-Catholics.

In parishes where the burdens of the ministry prevent these annual visitations zealous pastors

[28] Matt. 5, 16.

avail themselves of the opportunity of keeping in touch with parochial life through their sodalities, and when visiting the sick they make it a point to meet not only the members of their families but also to visit other families living near-by. They do not content themselves with the visits necessary for the administration of the Sacraments, but call repeatedly to console and comfort the sick, the stranger, and the destitute, and thus cover their entire territory in the course of the year. In my capacity as parochial missionary I have been repeatedly edified by such pastors, in rural as well as in city parishes, who could say with the Master: "I know mine and mine know me." They had made it a rule of life to devote the forenoon to church and school, and the afternoon when possible to pastoral visitation.

To have the full measure of God's blessing on his apostolic labors the priest should act in harmony with his ecclesiastical superiors and live in peace and concord with his fellow priests. Pastors should be conscientious in rendering an exact account of their stewardship to the chancery office, and assistants in keeping the pastor informed on the conditions of the parish. All should jealously guard the reputation of the clergy, speak with profound respect for all priests and bishops, and never lend a willing ear to disparaging remarks. Neighboring pastors especially should give their flocks evidence of the profound esteem and love they entertain for one another, and never permit their claim to a parishioner or to a few dollars revenue to become the subject of gossip and of disedification.

As pastor of souls the priest should seek to stimulate the sincerity and good will of every member of his flock by his disinterested zeal and spirit of sacrifice, and should never publicly call the good intentions of any one into question who has not maliciously given public scandal. He should aid all in the trials of life by his sympathy, counsel and prayers, and possess his soul in patience if some members of his flock meet his advances with reserve and manifest a want of appreciation for his labors. And he should make a special effort to be kind and considerate towards a personal enemy and thereby "heap coals of fire upon his head."[29]

Even as the Savior had to practise great patience and forbearance with His ignorant and uncouth disciples, so the pastor will have to use much tact and put up with many things to avoid misunderstanding and friction. As long as he does not possess a full measure of those qualities that render God's mediator naturally acceptable to man he should make it the rule of his ministry to be just and charitable in all his actions. He must win the good will of his people before he can lead them to Jesus Christ. Even our Savior first attracted mankind as Man before He enlightened and convinced those of good will as God-Man. His humility, sincerity and boundless charity won the hearts of men, and thus paved the way for His eloquence, His grace, and His miracles to bring conviction to their minds and lead them back to God.

[29]Rom. 12, 20.

As "the disciple is not above the Master, nor the servant above his Lord"[30] no zealous pastor should expect to govern his parish in undisturbed tranquillity. If Satan did not hesitate to use the pride, selfishness, and selfwill of mankind to persecute the Master and bring Him to the ignominious death of the cross, he will not hesitate to make trouble for the shepherd of His flock. Even when the priest is performing his duties faithfully he may therefore expect to meet with diabolical prejudice, opposition, and persecution. Let him then put his trust in God and in the protection of her who crushed the serpent's head. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord," is the assurance of the Master to His disciples. "If they have called the goodman of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household? Therefore fear them not. For nothing is covered that shall not be revealed: nor hid, that shall not be known."[31] In time of persecution especially may the priest trust to enjoy the special protection of Providence and to be sustained in his labors by light and strength divine. In fact, if the priest is to become conformable to his divine Model, he must "suffer persecution for justice' sake."[32] And if he is to apply the merits of the cross of Christ to his flock he must do it by patiently enduring his own cross. In fact, we may safely say that the priest is an *Alter Christus* and a *Pastor Bonus* in proportion as he is united to his divine Model by the daily Communion of the Cross. He should

[30]Matt. 10, 24. [31]Matt. 10, 25-26. [32]Matt. 5, 10.

therefore rejoice with the Apostles if he is "accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."[33]

The most efficacious assistance a zealous pastor can employ in grounding his parish in the faith, in maintaining it in a spirit of piety and devotion, and in building up his sodalities are parish missions and sodality retreats. When preceded by a parochial visitation and followed by the systematic efforts of the pastor they will arouse the indifferent, reclaim the fallen, rectify bad confessions, establish peace and concord, root out mixed marriages, ensure the frequentation of the Sacraments, and unite the parishioners with their pastor and their parish.

[33] Acts 5, 41.

2. THE TEACHER OF MANKIND.

Jesus Christ.

The universal desire of happiness which impels man to act inclines him to cherish truth and to live in accordance with it by the practice of virtue. Though he may discern some truths by the light of reason man needs the supernatural light of faith to appreciate the truths of religion. On this account God not only taught man the truths necessary for salvation in the beginning, but also gave him the gift of faith to accept them and the grace to live in accordance with them. Unfortunately, however, man permitted himself to be enslaved by the father of lies, and gave himself over to the folly of his mind instead of seeking his real happiness by following the light of truth and the guidance of divine grace.

To induce man to embrace His truth anew and to seek the guidance of His grace "God at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets. Last of all in these days He hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world."[1] This Son is the Word of God incarnate,[2] who said of Himself: "For this was I born, that I should give testimony to the truth."[3] By bearing testimony to the truth Jesus Christ became the Supreme Teacher of Mankind.[4] He came to free man from the darkness of

[1]Hebr. 1, 1-2. [2]John 1, 14. [3]John 18, 37.
[4]Matt. 23, 10.

error, to reveal the glory of His Father in all its splendor, and to make man partaker of His nature and sharer of His happiness.

Jesus Christ is well qualified to teach mankind. As the Word of God He is the source of all truth, and as God-Man He can communicate it both as God and as Man. On this account His zeal for the truth and His love for God and man enabled Him to speak "as one having power."[5] He called Himself "the light of the world"[6] and "the way, and the truth, and the life."[7] He called His teaching the good seed which contains the germ of life and produces fruit when sown in the heart of man,[8] and the bread which nourishes souls.[9] Scripture calls the word of God a consuming fire, a hammer that shatters the hardest rock,[10] a storm that destroys the cedars of Lebanon,[11] a great power[12] which cuts more keenly than a two-edged sword,[13] and silences the obstinate.[14]

As a nation the Jews still clung to the true faith when the Light of the World appeared. As individuals, however, very few sought to please God in sincerity and truth. The most of them were held captive by "the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."[15] To stimulate their faith in the truths the Jews already possessed, Jesus began to teach them by giving them an object lesson of practical faith by the virtues He practised in His private

[5]Matt. 7, 29. [6]John 9, 5. [7]John 14, 6.
[8]Matt. 13, 23. [9]Matt. 4, 4. [10]Jer. 23, 29.
[11]Ps. 28, 5. [12]Ps. 67, 12. [13]Hebr. 4, 12.
[14]Acts 6, 10. [15]I. John 2, 16.

life. He then taught them to follow His example, and encouraged them in following it by His personal kindness and the promise of true happiness. "Jesus began to do and to teach."[16] He wished to be born as the lowliest of the children of men to teach man humility. He lived a life of poverty to teach the necessity of detachment from material things to be enriched with spiritual treasures. He lived a life of spotless purity to teach man to see God. He lived a life of sacrifice to show man how to earn the "reward exceeding great."[17] In one word Jesus showed by His example that His yoke was sweet and His burden light,[18] before He offered to refresh them with His doctrine or promised rest to their souls.

Having attracted their attention by His example Jesus proceeded to gain the good will of the Jews by His kindness. His countenance beamed with meekness. He was patient with the sinner, compassionate with the repentant, and overflowed with sympathy towards the afflicted. He established His reputation for doing good in a short time, and referred to His works of mercy as evidence of His divine mission. "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them, and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me"[19] was the answer He gave to the disciples of John who asked whether He was the one sent by God.

As Teacher of mankind Jesus Christ encount-

[16]Acts 1, 1. [17]Gen. 15, 1. [18]Matt. 11, 30.
[19]Matt. 11, 5-6.

ered the densest ignorance, the bitterest prejudice, and the most diabolical hatred that the powers of darkness could array against Him. The combined influence of His holy life, His disinterested charity, and His stupendous miracles seemed only to harden the hearts of those who expected Him to flatter their pride, to feed their self-love,and to gratify their perverted will. But to all who were of good will He became indeed "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." "Come to Me," He said to them, "all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest for your souls."[20]

In language so simple that all could understand, with a grace that captivated all hearts, and with an authority that all were bound to recognize, this Teacher of mankind then explained the consoling truths of religion to the people. He kept nothing back, and added nothing to the message His Father had given Him to deliver. While He adapted His teaching to the capacity of His audience, He compromised no doctrine and left no one in doubt as to the meaning of His words. As He had already illustrated His teaching by the holiness of His life, so He now used examples from nature and daily life to impress it indelibly on their untutored minds. "Consider the lilies of the field," He said "how they grow: they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if

[20]Matt. 11, 28-29.

the grass of the field, which is today, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous therefore, saying; What shall we eat: or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.''[21]

This Teacher reminded His hearers that the law of God bound even the desires of their hearts,[22] that the time would come when they would have to render an account of their stewardship,[23] and that after death the good would enter life eternal, but the wicked would go down into the everlasting punishment.[24] To encourage all to break with their evil habits and to avoid the voluntary occasion of sin He said: ''If thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee having one eye to enter into life, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.''[25] And to encourage them to persevere in doing good He reminded them of the uncertainty of life,[26] of the excellence of serving God[27] and of the reward that awaited them in the life to come.[28] He welcomed the repentant sinner, encouraged all to love God as their Father, and promised to come when their trial of life was over to take them to the mansions of heaven,[29] where their sorrow would be forgotten and their

[21]Matt. 6, 28-33. [22]Matt. 18, 35. [23]Luke 16, 2.
[24]Matt. 25, 46. [25]Matt. 18, 9. [26]Matt. 24, 44.
[27]Matt. 6, 4. [28]Matt. 5, 19. [29]John 14, 3.

joy be complete.[30] "Heaven and earth shall pass away" He assured them, "but My word shall not pass away."[31]

The Priest.

The first duty of the priest as mediator between God and man is to teach the faithful to know, to love, and to serve God. By carrying out their commission to "teach all nations"[32] the Apostles became "fishers of men,"[33] and the Church enabled countless souls to become free with the liberty of children of God. As Jesus Christ is still our High Priest, so is He likewise the Teacher of mankind today. Though He has ascended with His bodily presence into heaven, He remains with His Church and by His Spirit gives life to the message which His Ambassadors deliver in His name. Through the ministry of His priests He proclaims the same truths which He preached on the hillside and seashore of Galilee. Through them He proclaims man's sublime origin and destiny, the infinite treasures of God's love and mercy, and the necessity of serving God faithfully to have the assurance of life everlasting.

To "preach the Gospel to every creature"[34] with profit the Ambassador of Jesus Christ must *know the message he is to deliver, communicate it in an appropriate manner, and persuade the faithful to make it the standard of their daily actions.* In proportion as the priest exerts himself to become a fit instrument of the Teacher of man-

[30]John 16, 22. [31]Mark 13, 31. [32]Matt. 28, 19.
[33]Matt. 4, 19. [34]Mark 16, 15.

kind will the Spirit of Jesus Christ address the audience through his preaching, and assist his knowledge by the gift of science, his faculty of communication by the gifts of understanding and counsel, and his power of persuasion by the gift of wisdom.

I. As the Word of God is the source of all divine knowledge so His Truth is the subject of all divine revelation. Whatever divine knowledge it has pleased God to communicate to man He has partly revealed to him in person, but principally taught him by the Incarnation, the example, and the doctrine of His divine Son. All revelation that preceded the coming of the Savior led up to Him, and all that came after Him led back to Him. Jesus Christ is therefore the source, the centre, and the subject matter of all revelation and the sum total of all the truths which the Catholic Church teaches. To know the truth is to know Jesus Christ;[35] and to know Jesus Christ is to know God and His relationship to the world. It is to know man's destiny and the way and the means of attaining it. It is to know the true faith, the Sacraments, and all Christian virtues. In one word it is to know all that comes to man from God through His Incarnate Word, as well as all that enables man to go to God through Jesus Christ. Hence St. Paul summed up God's message to man concisely when he wrote to the Corinthians: "We preach Christ crucified."[36]

To safeguard the deposit of faith and to teach sound, Catholic doctrine, the priest should there-

[35]John 14, 6. [36]I. Cor. 1, 23.

fore know Jesus Christ as the "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end"[37] both in theory and in practice. He should realize that "of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things,"[38] and that from Him flows "glory, and honour, and peace to every one that worketh good."[39] A person may be versed in the science of theology and be a stranger to Jesus Christ in practice. Sacred Scripture and theology may introduce the priest to Christ and Christ to him. Before he can abide in Christ, however, and Christ in him, and bear much fruit,[40] he must surrender himself to Jesus Christ by humble prayer and daily meditation; he must think Christ the Eternal Truth, admire Christ the uncreated Beauty, love Christ the only Good, and serve Christ the "Lord and Master"[41] in all sincerity and truth. In proportion, therefore, as a priest can say with St. Paul: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh: I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself for me,"[42] has he also mastered the message which Mother Church has commissioned him to preach to mankind.

To preach the word of God with profit the priest should not only know and possess it himself but also learn from the Teacher of mankind how to adapt it to the capacity and the needs of the faithful. Jesus adapted Himself and His teaching to the comprehension of all His hearers. He emphasized and illustrated His doctrine by His daily

[37]Apoc. 22, 13. [38]Rom. 11, 36. [39]Rom. 2, 10.
[40]John 15, 5. [41]John 13, 14. [42]Gal. 2, 20.

life no less than by His parables and examples from the obvious facts of nature. He made His teaching so clear that a child could easily grasp the essentials of salvation, and yet so profound that the acutest minds could not exhaust it. He unfolded the mysteries of His kingdom gradually, revealing the full sense of the Scriptures even to the Apostles only after His resurrection, and then made liberal allowance for the Spirit of truth to teach them all truth.[43]

Like his divine Model the priest should preach the eternal truths to ground the faithful in the faith and to fill them with the fear of the Lord. To inspire them with a contempt for earthly things and an esteem for spiritual riches he should compare the transitory goods of earth with the eternal joys of heaven. To enable them to render God a "reasonable service"[44] he should explain the teaching of the Church to them. And to encourage them to love God above all things, and to live devout lives, he should teach them the infinite love and mercy of God, the compassionate and self-sacrificing love of Jesus in becoming man, in dying upon the cross, in giving us the Church and the Sacraments as means of grace, and in giving us His own Mother to be our Mother, and the angels and saints to be our patrons and friends.

While making liberal allowance for the operation of the Holy Spirit in individual souls the priest should seek to develop the understanding of the faithful to a fuller comprehension of God's word.

[43] John 16, 13. [44] Rom. 12, 1.

If then he succeeds in stimulating their good will in proportion to their knowledge he will be rewarded by seeing them avoid the occasions of sin, pray, frequent the Sacraments, lead devout lives, abhor mixed marriages, and thus abide in Christ and Christ in them in proportion as faith takes root in their hearts, subjects them to the law of God, and prompts them to use the means of grace.

As Christ is equally necessary to all, the priest should preach the entire word of God to all according to their capacity: as an elementary instruction to children, as a more thorough instruction for adults, and as a popular sermon for the entire congregation. To cover the whole field of faith, morals and devotion, and to avoid tedious repetition the preacher should follow a definite course in expounding the word of God. And as the word of God is His living truth he will add both dignity and unction to his discourse by taking his illustrations as far as possible from well known scenes depicted in the Scriptures.

II. The God-Man is not only the contents of divine revelation, He is also the form of God's message to man. A combination of dignity and simplicity, of power and unction, of sublimity and sincerity is the characteristic of His teaching. Whenever He spoke as the representative of His heavenly Father He delivered His message with divine wisdom, power, and authority, and showed no trace of human rambling, affectation, or passion. He brought a message of love and mercy from heaven, and demanded love and fidelity in return. While adapting His language to the tem-

per of His audience, Christ insisted on denial of self, on obedience to God, and on charity towards all mankind.

As Ambassador of Jesus Christ the priest should unite himself to the Teacher of mankind and adopt His language when proclaiming the word of God. While mindful of his own personality he should speak with the *authority, dignity,* and *power* of God's representative, and with the *sincerity, simplicity* and *unction* of a devoted brother that he may captivate the minds and hearts of his listeners. He should not waste time and energy in idle speculation, but seek to convey a clear knowledge of Jesus Christ and His teaching to his hearers, and urge them by word and example to embrace it. In his dogmatic sermons he should reveal the greatness of God and the insignificance of man, and show how lovable God is in Christ and how pitiable man is without Him. In his moral sermons, on the other hand, he should prevail on his hearers to crucify the flesh with its concupiscences, by observing all the Commandments of God and His Church, to despise the world, to love Jesus Christ, and to proclaim and establish the love of Christ by imitation of His holy example.

"To preach the word of God in an appropriate manner," says St. Bernard, "*obedience, zeal,* and a *pure intention* are essential. The ambassador of Jesus Christ must preach when and where he is sent in His name." "How shall they preach," asks St. Paul, "unless they be sent?"[45] When

[45]Rom. 10, 15.

sent, however, he would oppose the will of God by refusing to preach, by preaching in an indifferent manner, or by seeking to shirk it entirely as did the prophet Jonas.[46] By exerting himself to do God's will, on the other hand, he ensures the cooperation of Christ in his preaching and promotes his own sanctification.

As Teacher of mankind Jesus Christ gave His priests an admirable example of obedience. Though He was destined to be "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles,"[47] He said: "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel,"[48] and actually confined His own preaching to the land of Palestine. The preaching of the Apostles was likewise characterized by obedience. After the ascension of their Master into heaven, they awaited the coming of the Holy Ghost as He had directed, and then bore witness unto Him " in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth,"[49] as Jesus had commissioned them, and at times as He personally directed them.[50]

The zeal of the priest as the teacher of mankind should be very great. The promotion of the glory of God, of the love of Jesus, and of the salvation of souls depends upon it. "To make Jesus a little better known and loved," says Father Faber, "is worth a lifetime of care and trial." Every priest may acquire this zeal by making the life of the Savior the subject of his daily meditation. During the three years of His public ministry Jesus

[46]Jonas 1, 3. [47]Luke 2, 32. [48]Matt. 15, 24.
[49]Acts 1, 8. [50]Acts 16, 6-9.

Christ travelled up and down the Holy Land, preaching in the temple and in the synagogues, on the mountain side and at the seashore to all that came to hear Him. His zeal was so great that He even forgot fatigue and hunger when a sinner was to be reclaimed,[51] or an honest soul to be instructed.[52]

Another way for the priest to stimulate his zeal is to meditate on his threefold obligation of love. God has put the priest under special obligation of loving Him by calling him to be a teacher of mankind. "The word of God should be honored," says St. Augustine, "even as the Body of Jesus Christ." Should the priest not serve God loyally for making him His ambassador to mankind? Besides, the eternal salvation of souls depends on the preaching of the word of God. Should the priest therefore not have compassion on the multitude, even as Jesus taught him by His example?[53] Finally, the priest must bear in mind that his own eternal happiness or misery will depend a great deal on his preaching of the word of God. St. Gregory says that "to neglect to preach the word of God is as great a crime as to starve the hungry." On the other hand the Savior says that "he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."[54]

The intention of the priest in preaching should be that of the Teacher of mankind, to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls. St. Thomas teaches that, "as it is the duty of a ser-

[51]John 4, 34. [52]John, 3, 2. [53]Matt. 15, 32.
[54]Matt. 5, 19.

vant to promote the interests of his master, a priest who does not preach with a pure intention is a tyrant and not a pastor of souls." God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth "by the foolishness of our preaching,"[55] writes St. Paul to the Corinthians.

Because a pure intention is so essential in ministering between God and man the enemy of God and man seeks to destroy it in the preacher. One he tempts to pride, another to vanity, a third to worldly ambition. A fourth he fills with envy at the success of a brother priest, tempts a fifth with dejection, and seeks to gain a sixth to promote his temporal advantage. To have the blessing of God upon his labors the priest must not consider himself immune to any temptation, but spurn those that tend to destroy the efficacy of his preaching. His piety should prompt him to make an explicit good intention frequently and to renew it in time of temptation. He should always be able to say with St. Paul: "With sincerity, but as from God, before God, in Christ we speak."[56] To be able to say with the Teacher of mankind at the close of his career: "I have not spoken of Myself"[57] the priest must study his divine Model closely, draw inspiration from the example of apostolic men, and meditate at times on the lamentable consequences that may follow from using the sacred ministry to further selfish ends.

III. The distinguishing marks of the preaching of apostolic men have always been *faith, char-*

[55]I. Cor. 1, 21. [56]II. Cor. 2, 17. [57]John 12, 49.

ity, and *purity of life.* Faith gives a solid foundation to the teaching of the Church, elevates the teaching of the priest above mere speculation, and makes it partake of the wisdom and mysteries of God. If the preacher has a strong faith he will be able to deliver his message with conviction and unction that will be irresistible. St. Paul had this faith when he said: "I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ."[58] Faith will enable the priest to transport his hearers into another world, to show them the vanity of earthly things, and to prevail on them to seek the treasures of heaven which endure forever. Faith will enable him to demonstrate that God is the eternal Truth, that the world is full of deception, that Satan is the father of lies, and that human nature is prone to vanity and insincerity. By means of faith he can enable his hearers to triumph over the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, to shun the vanities of the world, and to cling to the truth as children of light. Appearing before men as an ambassador from heaven the priest who is strong in faith, will have no difficulty in detecting, detesting, and dispelling the darkness of error and corruption.

To be the "light of the world"[59] and the teacher of mankind the priest must strive to increase his faith by acquiring a more explicit knowledge of its teaching, a clearer and firmer grasp on its de-

[58]Phil. 3, 8. [59]John 9, 5.

mands, and a more spontaneous and complete subjugation of his mind and will to its influence. He may grow in faith by studying the teaching of faith and the motives of credibility in a docile spirit, by humbly praying for interior light and guidance, by acting from motives of faith, and by making frequent acts of faith, since "the just man liveth by faith."[60]

To induce others to follow the teaching of faith the teacher of mankind must be animated by a *love of truth* and a *love for all souls* redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,"[61] says the Savior. As the fervor of devotion is the tongue by which the soul speaks to God, so the love of truth or animation of spirit is the tongue by which the priest must speak of God in words that please, instruct, and carry conviction with them. To enable his hearers to profit by his words he must at the same time be animated by charity for them. This enables the priest to gauge their mental attitude, their needs and sympathies, and to adapt his language to their comprehension and mode of expression. Only when he exercises this charity can the priest say with St. Paul: "I became all things to all men that I might save all."[62] To speak with this charity the priest must live a spiritual life himself, be devoted to prayer and meditation, and be animated with a burning zeal for souls.

Christianity is no empty speculation, but a matter of daily life. To influence his hearers the

[60]Rom. 1, 17. [61]Matt. 12, 34. [62]I. Cor. 9, 22.

teacher of mankind must practise what he preaches. Like his divine Master he must begin "to do and to teach."[63] He should be mindful of the advice of St. Paul to Timothy: "Be thou an example to the faithful in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, and in chastity."[64] Like the Apostle of the Gentiles he should be able to say to his spiritual children: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ."[65] God manifests Himself more fully to the clean of heart,[66] and readily cooperates with them, but turns from His minister who is defiled by sin.[67] On his part the priest obtains a clearer comprehension of religious truth by cultivating purity of life, and is impelled to teach it with greater zeal. Finally, the faithful easily arrive at a comprehension of the truth wher they are taught and influenced by the good example of their pastor. "You are our epistle of commendation," wrote St. Paul to the Corinthians, "which is read by all men; being manifested that you are the epistle of Christ."[68]

[63]Acts 1, 1. [64]I. Tim. 4, 12. [65]I. Cor. 4, 16.
[66]Matt. 5, 8. [67]Ps. 49, 16. [68]II. Cor. 3, 2.

3. THE INSTRUCTOR OF CONVERTS.

Jesus Christ.

Though the Savior's mission was primarily to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,[1] He took special interest in those other sheep[2] who were not of the family of Abraham. No matter how dense their ignorance on religious matters the Gentiles shared neither the fanaticism nor the political ambitions of the Jews, and so were more disposed to listen to the preaching of the Savior with sincerity and good will. On this account Jesus also manifested a preference for them and even declared that they would have done penance in sackcloth and ashes if He had wrought the miracles in Tyre and Sidon which He performed in Corozain and Bethsaida.[3] He praised the faith of the Canaanite woman[4] and said that He had not found faith like that of the Centurion in Israel.[5]

As Jesus wrought His first miracle at the request of His Mother so He performed the second in answer to the humble supplication of the Gentile ruler of Capharnaum.[6] Of the ten lepers He cured on a certain occasion the only one who returned to thank his Benefactor was a Samaritan.[7] Indeed the Savior's preference for the Samaritans was so well known that His enemies called Him a Samaritan in contempt,[8] while He did not hesitate

[1]Matt. 15, 24. [2]John 10, 16. [3]Matt. 11, 21.
[4]Matt. 15, 26. [5]Matt. 8, 10. [6]John 4, 46.
[7]Luke 17, 16. [8]John 8, 48.

to portray the charity of His own divine Heart for mankind in the parable of the Good Samaritan.[9] On the day of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem Jesus bestowed a marked favor on certain Gentiles who sought an interview with Him at the very time that the rulers of Israel were plotting His destruction. In their presence He asked His heavenly Father to glorify His name, when a voice from heaven replied: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."[10] He thus not only granted their request but also rewarded and strengthened their good will in a wonderful manner.

This preference which Jesus manifested for the Gentiles during His public life, He showed in a special manner in His passion and death. As the drama of His life drew to a close a Cyrenian was privileged to aid Him carry His cross, a Gentile thief received the assurance of life eternal from His dying lips, and a Roman centurion was the first to proclaim His divinity after His death.

Though His entire life was a manifestation of His goodness, love and mercy, Jesus revealed these qualities in an admirable manner at the well of Jacob. Persecuted in Judea He arrived footsore and weary at Sichar and seated Himself at the historic well to take a little needed rest, while the Apostles entered the town to buy bread. While awaiting their return Jesus showed Himself the model Instructor of converts by the tender charity He displayed towards a Samaritan woman who

[9]Luke 10, 30. [10]John 12, 28.

came to the well to draw water. This woman had grown up in ignorance and degradation. When she met the Savior she knew nothing of practical religion but was strongly prejudiced against the Jews on account of the arrogance and contempt which they manifested towards her people. When she came to the well Jesus arrested her attention by humbly begging a drink of water. "How dost Thou, being a Jew, ask a drink of me who am a Samaritan?" she replied in surprise. Instead of defending His nation or pleading His extreme want, Jesus aroused her interest by speaking of living water which He could give her, and which would quench her thirst forever. Having thus awakened a desire for better things in her, Jesus gently revealed to the Samaritan the misery of her past life, and thus forced her to acknowledge Him as a teacher sent by God. Instead of thinking of herself, however, she proceeded to place the religious difficulties that existed between the Samaritans and the Jews before Him. Without compromising the true religion in any way Jesus again concentrated her attention on herself by showing her that to be acceptable to God all must sincerely seek to do His holy will in all things. "They who adore God must adore Him in spirit and in truth,"[11] He said, and then proceeded to point out to her that the old dispensation would soon be superseded by a new one and that all of good will of all nations would become acceptable to God. The woman's interest now was assured, for she expressed her desire of being instructed by the

[11]John 4, 24.

Messias in all things. Whereupon Jesus gladdened her heart by saying: "I am He who am speaking to thee." Instantly the woman hastened to bring her townsfolks to the Messias. In the ardor of her joy she cried out to all she met: "Come and see a man who told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is not He the Christ?" Thus the whole town came to listen, "many believing on account of the word of the woman, while others were won by the preaching of the Savior."[12]

In his interview with Nicodemus Jesus again appears as the model Instructor of converts. The Samaritan woman was ignorant while Nicodemus was an educated man of the world. Though a member of the Sanhedrim he held aloof from that body in its opposition to the Savior. During the Master's public life Nicodemus filled the important position of ruler of the Jews in Jerusalem, and so had frequent opportunity to listen to His teaching and to witness His miracles. Being an upright man Nicodemus was convinced by the miracles of Jesus that His mission was from God. He sincerely longed for the better things of life and yet hesitated through human respect to proclaim himself a disciple of the Master. In this predicament he sought to effect a compromise with his conscience by calling on the Savior at night. "Rabbi," he said, "we know that Thou art come a teacher from God; for no man can do these signs which Thou dost, unless God be with him."[13] Not content with this speculative acknowledgment Jesus demanded the personal homage of faith in His teaching as

[12]John 4, 41. [13]John 3, 2.

long as Nicodemus admitted the divine criteria of His mission. "Amen, amen I say to thee," He declared with solemn emphasis, "unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." When Nicodemus still persisted in asking, "How can this be done?" after Jesus had explained the nature of the spiritual life to him, the Savior humbled the pride which prevented Nicodemus from professing his faith by asking: "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" Before dismissing him Jesus explained the necessity of faith to Nicodemus and concluded by showing him how "he that doth not believe, is already judged."[14]

The Priest.

There is a lurking suspicion in the minds of some, which one or the other expresses occasionally with every assurance of certainty, that "no convert can ever be a good Catholic." If this conclusion were based on sound logic the work of Redemption would have been in vain. Instead of arguing from reason enlightened by faith such persons seem to make sanctification depend more on "blood" than on the grace of God and the persevering good will of man. The laity might be pitied and condoned for seeming to begrudge those "other sheep" the gift of faith, even as the elder brother begrudged the welcome extended to the Prodigal Son. But if a priest of God were thus to express himself he would show himself lamentably deficient in the spirit of the Good Shepherd. His

[14]John 3, 18.

mission is not merely to do justice to his parishioners, but also to "teach all nations,"[15] to do all in his power to bring those "other sheep" into the true fold, and to make the grace of God triumph in the hearts of men. In virtue of his office as mediator between God and man the priest must pray for the conversion of mankind and seek to influence non-Catholics as well as Catholics to know, to love, and to serve God. To be true to his vocation the priest must let his light shine before men by the integrity of his private life, by the spirit of sacrifice with which he fulfils the duties of his office, and by the zeal and charity with which he performs the works of Christian mercy. In the language of St. Paul he is but "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal,"[16] if he has not charity. But in proportion as he yields to the charity of Christ which "presseth us"[17] will his zeal expand with the spirit of the Good Shepherd until it embraces all who are dear to His adorable Heart. And in proportion as he thus shows himself a true representative of Jesus Christ and enjoys the "good testimony of them who are without,"[18] will the priest also be in the necessary position to bring those "other sheep" into the true fold.

The mind of man is naturally sincere, and his heart religious. Unfortunately, however, his mind is tempted to insincerity by an unsympathetic and unscrupulous world, and his heart to selfishness by "the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."[19]

[15]Matt. 28, 19. [16]I. Cor. 13, 1. [17]II. Cor. 5, 14.
[18]I. Tim. 3, 7. [19]I. John 2, 16.

The priest must therefore expect to meet with obstacles in fostering sincerity and good will in all mankind but especially in converts before they are brought under the influence of grace. To succeed he must prepare them by the sympathy and interest he manifests in their behalf. He will gain their esteem by the integrity of his own life, but he must *sympathize* with non-Catholics to gain their confidence and good will. He must personally be their friend before he can induce them to reflect seriously on the eternal truths, or prevail upon them to make a systematic study of the true religion. "Nature is the foundation of grace," and "God promotes the sanctification of man through the agency of man" are axioms in Catholic theology. In the average convert friendship for some Catholic usually serves as the foundation for the grace of conversion, while the sympathy of the priest encourages the inquirer to cooperate with this grace and enables him to make the sacrifices which it entails.

The dispensations of Providence give every soul of good will an opportunity to find the truth and grace to embrace it. As mediator between God and man the priest should watch for these critical moments in the lives of the non-Catholics in his territory. At the favorable moment he should tactfully offer himself as their spiritual guide and not withhold his charity till they humbly beg for his assistance. Among the converts of our Lord Nicodemus alone sought light and guidance, and yet he did not profess himself a disciple till after the

Savior's death. The others were constrained by the tactful kindness and genuine goodness of Jesus to see the truth and embrace it while He lived. According to His example and His teaching in the parable of the Marriage Feast of the King's Son,[20] priests, as Christ's ambassadors,[21] should therefore *seek out* those "other sheep" in the highways and hedges and compel them to enter the one true fold.

In proportion as the pastor has organized his parish and induced his parishioners to live a life of solid piety will he find his efforts in behalf of non-Catholics powerfully seconded by the members of his own flock. One will introduce him to a neighbor who is yielding to the promptings of grace, and another to a friend who has finally decided to take the important step and join the Church. Especially by inducing the young people of his parish to be exemplary Catholics will the pastor extend his influence to those outside the true fold and pave the way for many conversions. To reap a rich harvest, however, the priest must not only be approachable but even go out of his way, as it were, to be on friendly terms with all the well disposed non-Catholics of his neighborhood. For, as little children must be won by kindness before they will permit themselves to be assisted to walk, so non-Catholics must first be won by the priest before they will accept him as their spiritual guide.

Like children, too, converts are inclined to be

[20]Luke 14, 23. [21]II. Cor. 5, 20.

idealists. The more a priest approaches their ideal of the divine Master the more willingly will they yield to his influence. They naturally expect the priest to be meek and humble, patient and pleasant, prudent and persevering in his labors, reverent in his treatment of holy things, animated by zeal, and sustained in his life of sacrifice by a boundless confidence in God. In proportion as they recognize him as a mediator between God and man will the yearnings of their hearts go out to him for sympathy and encouragement, even as the tendrils of a vine reach out and cling to an object that will support and enable it to attain its destiny. To avoid deteriorating into a mere functionary the priest should accustom himself to view life from the standpoint of his flock, and place himself in the position of his non-Catholic neighbors at times. This practice will also broaden his knowledge of human nature and enlarge his sympathies to such a degree that he will easily treat them as he would like to be treated, if he were in their circumstances.

In his instruction of converts the priest must take nothing for granted, and credit not even the educated non-Catholic with knowing anything in the Catholic sense. During his course of instruction the convert is helped to form new habits of mind and heart. His "feelings," however, cannot be expected to become Catholic until grace has triumphed over the last vestige of his prejudice, and enabled him to acquire a Catholic instinct by living a devout life. In proportion to his prejudice and lack of Catholic instinct will

the convert find difficulty in grasping the Catholic sense of some of the doctrines of the Church. On this account the priest will find less difficulty in bringing home these truths to the minds of Catholic children than to the average non-Catholic. Ignorance of this fact may cause him to suspect a neophyte of a want of sincerity or good will, when he is really exerting himself to the utmost to come to the light and possession of truth.

While instructing the convert the priest should take special pains to drill him in the practice of Christian virtue. Knowledge must serve as a foundation for virtue to be a power for good. To be such a power the Catholic knowledge imparted to a convert should be fundamental and developed according to his capacity. As a rule the priest should state the doctrine and show its reasonableness before answering any objections. The human mind is easily confused on a subject it has not mastered thoroughly. Besides, to encourage an inquirer to propose difficulties before the doctrine has been explained would invite useless controversy and foster pride instead of humility in the inquirer. Let the inquirer, therefore, note down his doubts and difficulties that they may be answered in detail in their appropriate place in the course of instruction. The priest should begin the course of instruction by showing man's absolute dependence on God and his obligation to serve and worship Him as He has ordained to attain happiness. He should next establish the divinity of Jesus Christ and of His Church, and only then proceed to show in detail what this

divine Church teaches man to believe and to do to be acceptable to the God of goodness, love and mercy.

The course of instruction should be arranged to suit the capacity and the time of the inquirer. Even the least talented can learn the fundamentals of Catholic faith, and be drilled in Catholic practice. Every convert ought to be well instructed and drilled in the practical points of Catholic life. He should be shown the necessity of humble, persevering prayer in the beginning, and not be permitted to advance till he practises it. He should be shown that conversion does not consist in merely *joining* the Church, but in putting off "the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error" and in putting "on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth."[22] It is equally important to inculcate the necessity of sacrifice for all who wish to become disciples of a crucified Master, and for the neophyte to practise it by generously abstaining from flesh-meat on Fridays as well as by assisting at holy Mass on Sundays. Finally, no course of instruction would be complete that did not make the convert appreciate the infinite treasure Catholics possess in the Holy Eucharist. By means of It Jesus Christ dwells on our altars, nourishes our souls with His divine life and enables us to offer God an acceptable Sacrifice.

As Catholic practice is more important than mere instruction the priest should not rush his

[22] Eph. 4, 22-24.

neophytes through the catechism, but rather seek to assist them in every way to practise what they have learned. Ordinarily one instruction a week during six months will prove more beneficial than six instructions a week for one month. The word of God must not only be sown on good soil, but must also have time to germinate and grow before it can produce fruit. As a prudent guide the priest should, therefore, aim at thoroughness on his own part, while cultivating sincere conversion and solid piety in his converts, rather than hastening to finish the course of instruction.

It is true that the Church provides sponsors to make up for the neglect of parents, and to take their place in educating the child if they die. Ordinarily, however, the priest is expected to be both spiritual father and mother to his converts. His obligation towards them precedes and is more binding than that of mere sponsors. He should therefore keep in touch with those of his flock whom he has received into the Church and lead them on in the practice of virtue. If he must part with them before they are well established in Catholic life he should introduce them to their new pastor that he may render them that assistance which they still require. Converts that are instructed and assisted in this way often make great sacrifices for the faith, and usually develop into model Catholics. The few who relapse on the other hand, like Catholics that apostatize, will be found as a rule to have been well grounded neither in Catholic teaching, nor in Catholic practice.

4. THE FRIEND OF CHILDREN.—THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL.

Jesus Christ.

Among all the people Jesus met as Teacher of mankind the little ones were the object of His special affection. He had compassion on the multitude, was familiar with His Apostles, and merciful towards repentant sinners. He praised the faith of the Centurion, and the generosity of the widow in the temple, but He embraced, laid His hands on, and blessed the children and said: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Amen I say to you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it."[1]

On another occasion when the Apostles had disputed which among them would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus seated Himself, called the twelve, and taking a child, He placed him in the midst of them. Whom when He had embraced, He said to them: "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven."[2]

Children possess certain spiritual qualities that render them dear to God and man. In them the

[1]Mark 10, 14-15. [2]Matt. 18, 3-4.

impulse for happiness, which God has implanted in every human heart, not only craves what is good, but also desires truth and loves virtue. Before vice has time to corrupt them their minds are sincere, their consciences tender, and their wills easily inclined to do right. This longing for the good, the true and the beautiful is not confined in them to material things but extends as well to the moral order, and fills them with awe and love for God and His representatives, with a love for truth and justice, and with generosity towards mankind. It makes them meek and humble in their own estimation, inclines them to credit others with every good quality, and prompts them to idealize their parents and other representatives of God in a special manner as the personifications of knowledge, wisdom, and power.

These natural virtues, which survive the corruption of original sin, dispose children for the reception of the supernatural virtues and form the basis for the operation of the Holy Ghost before the passions can prompt them to rebel against their instinct of right and wrong. When children have been kept from corruption by the watchfulness of their parents, and encouraged in virtue by their precept and example, they are, therefore, in the best of dispositions to profit by the word of God as they emerge from infancy to the age of reason. In the language of the Savior they receive the seed upon good ground, and bearing forth fruit yield "the one an hundredfold, and another sixty, and another thirty."[3] At no

[3]Matt. 13, 23.

period of their after-life will they again be naturally so susceptible to the influence of God's word. If they persevere in their sincere good-will, or recover it at a later period, it will have to be by triumphing over "the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."[4]

Others may like children because they are little, artless, and dependent, but Jesus Christ had a predilection for them because like Him they were "meek, and humble of heart,"[5] because they were still pure and innocent, because they came to Him with guileless minds and hearts and were still free from the corruption of the world. His love for them was not a mere sentiment but sprang from an appreciation of their excellence in the sight of God. In fact He emphasized their qualities as the standard of true citizenship in the kingdom of heaven. The world, said Jesus, had nothing in common with Him, but He showed marks of special affection to the little ones because all they had they held in common with Him. They were so dear to Him in fact that He included all in their class who shared their dispositions. He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said: "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight."[6]

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[4]I. John 2, 16. [5]Matt. 11, 29. [6]Luke 10, 21.

The Priest.

Since the Savior enlightened His disciples on His esteem and love for children Mother Church has not only permitted the little ones to come to Him but has considered it her most sacred duty to bring them as early in life as possible. As soon as they see the light of day she is solicitous to make them members of His mystical body, and frequently reminds the parents of their responsibility as the visible guardian angels of the little ones so dear to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. For God has ordained that the children be brought to Him by the love, example, and precept of their parents, and then confirmed in His knowledge, love and service by the devotion, example, and instruction of their pastor and teachers. Even when his zealous efforts are ably seconded by religious teachers specially trained and devoted to the work of Catholic education, the priest as the representative of Christ and His Church, must still prove himself the special friend of children to follow the example of his divine Model.

In proportion as the priest is animated by the spirit of Jesus Christ will he experience that of all the labors of the ministry his efforts in behalf of the children will be the easiest to be performed, the ones most appreciated, and the ones productive of the most lasting results. Of all his flock the children are by nature and grace in the most receptive disposition, while the truths to be brought home to them are of a most elementary nature, and should be imparted more in a spirit

of paternal affection than according to the principles of science or the rules of pedagogy. While imparting this religious instruction the priest should above all be a loving father teaching his favorite children what is dearest to every Christian heart. He is encouraged in his labors by the knowledge that children are more appreciative and less critical than their elders, that their instincts are more natural and normal, that the promptings of grace are less hampered in them by the allurements of the flesh, the world, and the devil, and that whatever he does for them will be appreciated by the entire congregation.

With a little patience and perseverance in catechizing the priest can easily overcome the difficulties he may encounter. In proportion as he puts aside the science of theology and studies the nature of children will he come down to their level and find a pleasure in teaching them to know, love, and serve God. If he bears in mind that children are as easily distracted as they are interested he will not be inclined to grow impatient at their foibles, but will seek to make his instruction attractive by the use of the blackboard, of charts, of the magic-lantern, and of moving pictures, and stimulate the children in their study by words of encouragement and the promise of suitable rewards. He should above all beware of wearying them by monotony, severity, or undue protraction of the instruction.

By nature and grace God destined parents to be the first models and educators of their children. To succeed in their life of labor and sacrifice they

must rule the children with affection and still be able to assert their authority when necessary, even as God seeks to govern mankind by His love and yet knows how to inspire the wayward with His salutary fear. To prove himself the true friend of children the priest must recognize this general law and treat them with a maternal affection tempered with paternal authority. For as all vegetation develops rapidly under the stimulating influence of the light and warmth of the sun's rays, so children will quickly put aside their shyness and reserve, and moderate their playfulness or petulancy and profit by spiritual light when it is imparted to them with the warmth of genuine affection. And as the same vegetation is stimulated by gentle showers but often devastated by storms, so children at times may need the chastening influence of paternal authority to ensure their moral development, but would be discouraged and crushed by merciless severity

As the gardener studies the nature of his plants that he may be able to give them the proper attention, so the priest should study the children of his parish that he may treat them according to their individual needs. He should encourage the timid with kindness, treat the backward with unvarying patience, repress the forward with gentle firmness, and require more from those that are talented and advanced in years. He should be satisfied with a little at a time provided they master it thoroughly and should stimulate both their memory and their conscience by frequent repetition of the more practical points of Catholic life.

He should not keep back the brighter children for the sake of the others, however, lest he might cool their enthusiasm and seem to encourage slothfulness. He should rather insist on their studying the same lesson in a more thorough and comprehensive manner from a larger catechism or form the more advanced children into a separate class.

The priest is best qualified to be the catechist of children. His knowledge of theology safeguards the correctness of his teaching and enables him to bring out and emphasize the practical points of Catholic doctrine. As the children regard him as the representative of a God whom they love, he has their good will before they come to him. And as "all things are clean to the clean" he will have little difficulty in growing in their estimation and affection as long as he is pleasant, spiritual minded, and sincere in his efforts to help them learn to know, love, and serve God. He ought to beware not only of scandalizing them but also of appearing so pious that he cannot sympathize with them in their amusements, so stern as to chill their youthful ardor, or so severe as to manifest impatience in look, word, or deed at the least provocation. If he observes these points the priest will be idolized by the children even though he possesses only a modicum of the qualities that render God's mediator acceptable to man.

To render his efforts in behalf of the children most effective the priest should treat all the children with uniform kindness, prepare his instruction beforehand, and appear promptly at the

time and in the place appointed for this exercise. After the children have been seated and have given him their attention the priest should define the subject to be treated, and take pains to make his definition short, clear, and interesting. He should then proceed to develop the subject in a simple yet pleasant, spirited and dignified manner, taking care to adapt his words and illustrations to the comprehension of the children. He should use Catholic terminology only when that is necessary to convey the teaching of the Church, as the children must first grasp the truth in their own way before they can recognize it when clothed in the language of the Church. He should then stimulate their interest in the subject by asking the questions in the catechism first of the brighter children and then of the others. He may also ask questions that are not in the book but which he has already explained to the children more advanced in Christian Doctrine, and should encourage all to propose their difficulties for solution so that he may make his instruction more practical. Only after he has satisfied himself that all understand the lesson should the priest proceed to apply its teaching to the lives of the children by showing them how and where to practise it. He should not content himself with inculcating the more important points of Catholic life once or twice but should conclude every instruction by reviewing some of their obligations towards God, towards their family, towards their neighbor, and towards themselves, until the salutary truths of religion become a part of the children's lives.

As a rule the ideas of children are only rudimentary and vaguely formed, while their vocabulary is equally vague and limited. To bring home the abstract truths of religion to them by the choice of suitable words and comparisons the priest must, therefore, associate more or less with the children. He should beware, however, of teaching nature instead of religion by permitting their imagination to dwell on the illustration without following him to its application. He should begin by teaching the little ones the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Creed, and the Christian Acts, and should strive to give them a general idea of the goodness of God, of the importance of salvation, and of prayer as a means of attaining it, of the malice of sin, and of the excellence of virtue. Only then should he proceed with the lessons in the catechism. In his instruction the priest should guard against teaching catechism as a system of theology, as well as against awakening any doubts which he does not answer fully. He should demand that the children learn the words of the catechism thoroughly so that these may serve as a basis of their religious knowledge. On this account it is advisable to give the children too little rather than too much to commit to memory, so that they make solid progress, acquire a love for the study and practice of religion, and lay the foundation for thoroughness in all their actions.

It is universally recognized in the United States that our children cannot be fortified sufficiently by home and church influence to withstand the se-

ductions of a godless and materialistic world. It requires the combined influence of home, church, and school to fit them adequately for the battle of life. The Catholic school is the nursery of the parish and a most powerful safeguard of religion. No parish attains its full development without a Catholic school, and a congregation that neglects to establish it, when God blesses them with the means, soon deteriorates in spirit and decreases in membership. For not only individuals but the entire parish will suffer if the seed of religion is not developed in the child. And only when the influence of home and Church is supplemented by a Catholic school, do we have the ideal conditions for making religion permeate the entire nature of the child. It should therefore be the earnest solicitude of every pastor to equip and maintain an efficient parochial school as soon as possible.

In rural districts where the faithful are too few to maintain a parochial school the pastor should emphasize family devotions in a special manner to surround the children with a religious atmosphere at home. He should assemble the children that cannot be sent to a Catholic boarding-school at a convenient hour on Saturdays for religious instruction and confession. As soon as they have mastered the essentials of religious truth and practice, he should admit the children to Holy Communion, and form them into a sodality. He should do all in his power to win their hearts and give them a relish for religious practices. By making the instruction pleasant, short, and spirited the pastor will induce the children to look forward

to it with fond anticipation and ensure their regular attendance at Confession and Communion.

After Mass on Sundays he should assemble the children again and have them recite the lesson explained on the preceding day. It will be an incentive to the children if the pastor encourages them by suitable rewards to learn the lesson well. If it is impossible for him to preside at this Sunday School the pastor should train catechists to take his place, but should require these to make a report of the attendance, conduct, and recitation of each child. With the cooperation of parents and catechists and the blessing of God a zealous pastor may thus hope to confirm the children in the faith and induce them to practise their religion even after they have grown up and passed from under his influence.

Many Bishops wisely require city pastors to begin their parish plant with a combination church and school building, which they may later on devote exclusively to school and sodality purposes. On account of the demoralizing influence of modern industries on the home life in cities children reared there often have not the religious advantages which country children enjoy, and on the other hand are exposed to countless temptations and occasions to sin that are subversive of both faith and Christian morality. On this account it is impossible for them to grow up in the practice of their religion without the aid of the parochial school. Let the pastor therefore put his trust in Providence and open a school as soon as possible. In planning the building he should not only con-

sider the future needs of the parish but also the financial resources at his disposal, so that he may not incur a greater debt than his parish can carry. A reasonable debt has a stimulating influence on the entire congregation, but too great a financial encumbrance exercises a depressing influence on both pastor and people.

In past years various sisterhoods have opened combination day and boarding schools in various mission stations throughout the country. These schools were begun as works of zeal by the sisters, are maintained at their expense and are entirely under their control. As a financial investment they are failures for the sisters, and as schools they are not the most desirable for a parish. The ideal parochial school is erected and maintained by the parish, is frequented by all the children of the parish, is under parochial and diocesan supervision, and has religion taught in it by the pastor as official representative of Jesus Christ in the parish.

Though all our sisterhoods have the reputation of being efficient teachers, some are more suited to the wants of a particular parish than others. For example, some sisterhoods are forbidden by their Rule to take care of the altar in the parish church, to play the organ even for the children's choir, and to teach boys in the higher grades, while others aim to be of special assistance to the pastor. Some are bound by their Rule to observe the spirit of the cloister by remaining on the premises throughout the school year, while others aim to do missionary work by visiting the homes of

their pupils and the sick of the parish. Finally, some make a specialty of teaching parochial schools, while others engage in various works of mercy, or seek to confine their labors to larger schools and academies. As a rule the members of diocesan Congregations adapt themselves more to local circumstances while Congregations with a generalate necessarily confine their labors to definite channels approved for them by Rome.

When a pastor invites Sisters to assume the management of his school he must respect their Constitutions and Customs which define their mode of life, and does well to leave to them the settling of the details that enter into the management of the school. Without sufficient reason he should make no change in the plan of studies approved by the diocesan Board of Education. He should rather concentrate his efforts on inducing all the children of his parish to attend the parochial school, on supporting the sisters in their labors by his personal sympathy and counsel, and on upholding their authority in the class room. He should consider them as pious women who have consecrated their lives to the service of the Church, show his appreciation of their services, and do all in his power to make their life pleasant and happy.

As a rule it is not advisable for the pastor to teach any other branch than Religion in his school, though he should seek to be occasionally present at the recitations, to keep in touch with affairs, and to encourage both teacher and children. But no matter how busy he may be with other affairs,

he should never relegate this most important branch to the sisters. He alone in the parish has made a systematic study of philosophy, theology and Sacred Scripture. He knows their practical bearing on Catholic life, the difference between mortal and venial sin in the concrete, and the special dangers to which his children are exposed. To enable the children to develop a true conscience, and to stimulate them in living a Catholic life, he should make the religious instruction of his children the special feature of his parochial labors. He should explain every lesson thoroughly and preside at least once a week in every room at the recitation of Catechism and Bible History. For the same reason he should personally take charge of the First Communion class, and rather defer other work than neglect this labor so dear to the Sacred Heart, and so important for the welfare of the children.

Since the publication of the decrees on the early Communion of the children and the frequent Communion of all the faithful, some zealous pastors have devised with the cooperation of the Sisters means of introducing both practices into the lives of the School children to the edification of the entire congregation.

5. CONFESSOR AND DIRECTOR.

Jesus Christ.

The Mosaic law prescribed confession of the sin committed and the offering of the corresponding sacrifice to God before the priest could declare the repentant sinner reconciled to God.[1] This law had been in force fifteen hundred years before the Son of God came on earth to perfect it.[2] Jesus Christ dealt with persons who knew the law, and who, "confessing their sins,"[3] were baptized either by John the Baptist or by His own disciples.

In perfecting the law of forgiveness of sin Jesus Christ claimed not only the right of the Jewish priesthood to declare sins forgiven when atonement and reparation had been made according to the law, but also the personal power of forgiving sin and reconciling the repentant sinner to God.[4] To convince His enemies that He had this power Jesus miraculously cured a man sick with the palsy. He frequently exercised the power of forgiving sins during His public ministry and explicitly delegated the same power to His Apostles when He appeared to them the first time after His resurrection. Breathing on them He said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."[5]

When Jesus arose in the synagogue at Nazareth and declared the fulfilment of the prophecy of

[1]Levit. 4, 35. [2]Matt. 5, 17. [3]Matt. 3, 6.
[4]Mark 2, 10. [5]John 20, 23.

Isaias: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Wherefore he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart,"[6] He at the same time proclaimed His mission to be the reconciliation of repentant souls to God. "I came not to call the just, but sinners,"[7] He said on another occasion. As evidence of His fidelity to His mission and of His success in reconciling sinners to God, the Evangelists not only give us vivid descriptions of touching conversions effected by Jesus Christ, but also add the testimony of His enemies who contemptuously called Him the "friend of publicans and sinners,"[8] and finally reputed Him among the wicked by crucifying Him between two thieves.[9]

On account of the private nature of auricular confession the exercise of the power of forgiving sin, whether by the Savior Himself, or later on by His Apostles, can enter only incidentally into the inspired narrative. We may reasonably presume, however, that among those "many other things which Jesus did"[10] that are not recorded, by no means the least consoling and salutary was the hearing of confession by Jesus and His Apostles. What can be more natural and practical than to suppose that during the slow process of their spiritual development the Master was both Confessor and Director to His Apostles? It is true, He was God, but He ordinarily acted as man. "Being made in the likeness of man," says St. Paul, He was "in habit found as a man."[11] By

[6]Luke 4, 18. [7]Mark 2, 17. [8]Matt. 11, 19.
[9]Mark 15, 28. [10]John 21, 25. [11]Phil. 2, 7.

thus acting as the personal guide of the Apostles Jesus Christ could ensure their advancement in solid virtue and train them to become efficient agents of His mercy.

If a repentant sinner spontaneously discloses the secrets of his heart to a sympathetic priest, may we not reasonably presume that the most consoling things in the life of the Good Shepherd were those private interviews with repentant souls in which He encouraged them by the sympathy of His loving Heart to make an open confession of their sins and to detest them as the greatest evil? In those interviews He directed them how to guard against relapse, how to uproot their evil habits, how to avoid the dangerous occasions of sin, and how to fortify themselves against temptation by humble, persevering prayer.

The glimpses which the Evangelists give us of the Good Shepherd reconciling repentant souls to God constitute a mere outline of His daily labors. By considering this outline from a human standpoint we may fill in the details with reasonable precision. Let us take the Savior's conduct towards Simon Peter as an illustration. The Evangelists tell us that Jesus warned this Apostle of his presumption, foretold his lamentable fall, and assured him of his perseverance in the faith. They tell us that as Jesus was led from the court-room of the high priest, after His denial by Peter, He looked at His erring Apostle, that He appeared privately to him after His resurrection, and that at the Sea of Galilee He asked him thrice: "Simon,

son of John, lovest thou Me?"[12] before He finally made him chief pastor of His flock. Now, as Peter went out and "wept bitterly"[13] when he was reminded by the look of Jesus of His prediction, he longed to cast himself at the feet of his Master, confess his sin, and beg for forgiveness. And as circumstances prevented him from carrying this resolution into effect before the consummation of the Sacrifice on Calvary, Jesus graciously gave him an opportunity by appearing to Peter soon after His resurrection. Who will doubt that the Good Shepherd then pressed that Lost Sheep to His Heart even as He permitted the disciple whom He loved to lean on His breast at the Last Supper?[14] It was then that Peter received the assurance of pardon for which His sorrowing heart craved. It was there the Master prepared Peter to make due reparation at the Sea of Galilee for the scandal he had given to his brethren. Does this not explain the anxiety of Peter to land as soon as John recognized Jesus standing on the shore and said: "It is the Lord!"[15]

We have sufficient evidence in the Gospel narrative to form a fair estimate of the Savior's exalted qualities as Confessor and Director. He appears at every step of His public life as the Light of the world that had come to give testimony of the truth. He was so conscious of the rectitude of his conduct that He challenged His enemies and asked: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" His charity for mankind was so

[12]John 21, 17. [13]Matt. 26, 75. [14]John 13, 25.
[15]John 21, 7.

great that He took upon Himself the sins of the world. And His zeal for the conversion of souls was so ardent that He paused at no personal sacrifice to win them to God. Though He journeyed on foot over Judea, Samaria and Galilee, and addressed all kinds of people, under all kinds of circumstances, Jesus was most prudent and practical in the exercise of His ministry. He never compromised the glory of God and never jeopardized the salvation of a soul. He always said and did the right thing at the right time and in the right way. He insisted on selfdenial and the love of God as essential to the spiritual life, and made fraternal charity the test and measure of their practice. He placed the perfection of the spiritual life before the people in the Beatitudes and encouraged all to strive after their attainment, but He manifested an inexhaustible compassion and patience with His disciples in the faults they committed while striving to advance in virtue. With the solicitude of a mother for her child Jesus gradually enlightened, stimulated, and directed the good will of all on the way of holiness and truth, and made them realize that His yoke was sweet, and His burden light.

The Priest.

The responsibilities of the priest as Confessor and Director or as Judge and Physician of souls are very great.[16] Only he who does all in his power to qualify as agent of God's mercy can acquire that skill necessary to save himself from

[16]Counc. Trent, Sess. 6, c. 1.

contamination and promote the spiritual welfare of his penitents. As the exercise of this office is so dear to the Good Shepherd the priest who is devoted to it may rest assured that special graces and dispensations of Providence will be vouchsafed him in its exercise by virtue of his ordination, the prayers of the Church, and the intercession of individual souls.

According to the prophet Ezechiel, a priest has as many souls to save as there are souls in his parish. "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold I myself come upon the shepherds, I will require my flock at their hands."[17] Priests must save their own souls by their personal sanctity and the faithful discharge of their office, and the members of their flocks by prudent direction and sympathetic assistance to free them from the slavery of sin and to advance them on the way of solid virtue. On account of the comprehensive nature of his responsibilities as Confessor and Director St. Lawrence Justinian says it is dangerous to become answerable for others, and St. Gregory asserts that in no other position is a mistake more disastrous.

The first requisite to preach sound doctrine in the pulpit and apply it with skill in the confessional is a thorough knowledge of theology and of human nature. To do efficient work in the confessional the priest must unite the theoretical knowledge of theology with its skillful application to the individual circumstances of his penitents. Theo-

[17]Ez. 34, 10.

retical knowledge without skillful application, or practical experience without sound principles in guiding souls, would be dangerous to both Confessor and penitents. The former would incline the Confessor either to rigorism or to laxity in dealing with his penitents, while the latter would subject the exercise of his sacred ministry to the promptings of his sympathies and, like the blind leading the blind, would expose both him and his penitents to perdition. As he easily forgets his knowledge of theology, and as human nature is never the same in the concrete, the priest who is desirous of doing his duty as Confessor and Director must make a life study both of theology and of human nature, and devoutly pray for light and guidance in the exercise of his holy office.

The second requisite for the Confessor and Director is personal sanctity or purity of heart. Both the sacredness of his office and his duty towards himself and towards his penitents demand it. Without great purity of heart the priest would ever be in danger of administering the Sacraments in an unworthy manner and of defiling his own soul by mortal sin. Without solid virtue a priest would expose himself to the contamination of sin by hearing confessions, even as a physician would expose himself to infection by treating certain diseases without taking the proper precautions. Besides, he would not inspire that confidence and respect which prompt his penitents to disclose the secrets of their hearts to him as their mediator through Christ, if he were not leading an exemplary life. Finally, he would not be in a position

to treat them with that wisdom and rectitude which contribute so much to their amendment and perseverance, if he himself were enslaved by sin.

The third requisite is charity or zeal for souls. All that has been said on *The Qualities That Render God's Mediator Acceptable to Man* apply in a special manner to the Confessor and Director. The priest sows the seed of God's word in his sermons and instructions and expects to reap the harvest in the confessional. There his charity must embrace alike rich and poor, old and young, men and women, saints and sinners. Discrimination in favor of the rich, the pious, or the young would blight the Confessor's usefulness by turning those away who might stand most in need of his services and might profit most by them.

This zeal should prompt the pastor to erect the confessional in a place easily accessible to all, and to construct it in a way that both he and the penitent may speak without fear of being heard by any one outside. And, as he interviews more persons in the confessional than in the office, he should provide it with as much comfort and venti lation as possible. Confession is always a humiliation to the penitent and a burden to the priest. By providing a comfortable confessional the pastor avoids a cause of irritability and enables both himself and his penitent to feel at home during the interview. If then he arranges the hours for hearing confession to suit the convenience of the people, and is in the confessional at the appointed time, he has taken the preliminary steps of a devoted Confessor.

As penitents usually enter the confessional with troubled consciences, and at times have to do great violence to themselves to overcome the repugnance of pride and the temptation of Satan, the Confessor should treat them with unvarying meekness and affability. He should never address them in a harsh or loud voice. If they manifest any nervousness or perturbation he should open the interview by quietly asking them the time of their last worthy confession. He should make it a rule to do this, especially if the penitents are children, ignorant or negligent Catholics, or young persons who manifest timidity or confusion on entering the confessional.

To safeguard the spiritual welfare of his penitents and the validity and integrity of the Sacrament, and also to economize time, the Confessor should endeavor to obtain a general idea of the moral condition of his penitents by asking a few leading questions if they hesitate to begin their accusation. He should then limit the rest of his interrogations to the mortal sins, their number, their proximate occasion, and the bad habits of which the penitents may have been guilty. It is true that the priest should incline to pardon penitents and to dispense the mercies of God with a lavish hand. But if the Confessor finds a penitent who is the slave of a bad habit, who is living in the proximate occasion of sin, or who has not yet made reparation for grave scandal, injustice, or slander, he is bound to enlighten that penitent *in all charity* on his lamentable condition, and can remit his sins only after he has disposed the

penitent for absolution by inciting him to true sorrow for his sins, and by ensuring his amendment of life and due reparation for the wrong he has done.

The charity and zeal of the Confessor must be directed by prudence if it is to be conducive to the glory of God and the sanctification of souls. Prudence must direct the Confessor and Director in maintaining purity of heart and in preserving his own reputation, in enlightening and questioning his penitents, in imparting, deferring, or refusing absolution, and in directing his penitents on the way to amendment, in the choice of their vocation, and in the use of the means of attaining perfection. Prudence must guide him in tempering the rigor of the judge with the sympathy of a friend and the solicitude of a spiritual physician, and in safeguarding the sanctity of the Sacraments without prejudice to the welfare of his penitents. Prudence enables the Confessor and Director to be *practical.* If he is too theoretical or diffuse he bewilders his penitents and often wastes valuable time, if too severe he discourages them, and if too lax he inclines them to presumption. Prudence enables him to treat his penitents according to their concrete nature: men with brevity and fairness, women with reserve and kindness, young persons with consideration and encouragement, and children with love and indulgence.

As Penance is the Sacrament of God's mercy, prudence must above all guard the Confessor and Director against that excessive severity condemned

by the prophet Ezechiel. "The weak you have not strengthened," he said to the Jewish priests of his day, "the sick you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, and the lost you have not sought; but you ruled over them with rigour, and with a high hand; and my sheep were lost."[18] If the priest must be severe as Judge he should, like a kind mother chastising her child, be profuse in his sympathy as a friend, and solicitous as Physician of souls. By keeping the Good Shepherd before him as his Model the Confessor and Director will cultivate that patience, kindness, and prudence which render him skillful in the discharge of his duties, and which enable him to observe the wise rules laid down for his guidance by holy mother Church.

Though it is well, as St. Alphonsus remarks, to ask any necessary explanation of the penitent when he accuses himself of a sin, he should never be rebuked for his faults while he is making his confession lest he be tempted by fear or shame to conceal a mortal sin. In fact the Confessor should guard against all personal irritation and resentment, and never scold a penitent who is trying to make a good confession. For, no matter how much his sins are reprehensible, the penitent deserves praise for repenting of his sins and amending his life. If he deserves censure on account of his questionable disposition, and the Confessor is confident the penitent will profit by it, he may administer the correction in all charity after he has heard the penitent's confession.

[18] Ez. 34, 4-5.

This is also the appropriate time for the Confessor to give the penitent suitable instruction on the obligations of his state in life, to warn him of a particular occasion to sin, especially of mixed marriages, and to point out to him the necessity of using the means of grace. But he should beware of declaring a sin just confessed to be mortal unless the penitent admits that he knowingly and willingly transgressed the Law of God in a serious matter. In forming his judgment of the penitent's guilt the Confessor should not only accept his statement but also take his mode of expression into consideration, which at times inclines to minimize, and at times to exaggerate his guilt. If a penitent is in bad faith, or in doubt about the gravity of a sin or its proximate occasion, he should always be enlightened and admonished. When he is in good faith and apt to remain so, however, he should be enlightened and warned only when he is apt to profit by the admonition, or when the general welfare demands it. Finally, the Confessor should not proceed to absolve and dismiss his penitent before he has addressed a word of encouragement to him and exhorted him to sorrow and amendment.

If a penitent is not disposed for absolution it is the priest's obligation as spiritual physician to dispose him by making him realize the gravity of his condition, by inciting him to sorrow and amendment, and by indicating to him the means necessary for his amendment. In exceptional cases it may be well to defer absolution for a few days to ensure the amendment of a particular penitent. As a rule, however, it is advisable in

our day to impart absolution to every penitent that can be disposed for it, and to urge the frequentation of the Sacraments on all as the most efficacious means of amendment and of perseverance. For, there is always a prudent presumption of a penitent's proper disposition who voluntarily comes to confession and expresses his sorrow and purpose of amendment, unless such evidence of his indisposition would appear in the course of his confession as would oblige the Confessor to refuse him absolution.

The efforts of the priest as Director of souls include all the instruction, counsel, and exhortation which he addresses to individuals in or out of the confessional to enable them to accomplish the divine Will, though the term is often confined to the special assistance which a devoted priest gives to his penitents. This direction helps the sinner to repentance, the repentant to amendment, the converted soul to solid virtue, and the devout soul to live a life of continual labor, patient endurance, and fervent prayer. It enables the young to discover and embrace their vocation, and directs all to use the special means necessary to fulfil the obligations of their state in life. In this age when every diocese is in need of zealous laborers for the Lord's vineyard, and every Religious Order of devoted workers, priests should make a special effort to foster vocations to the higher life. In fact a pastor who does not imbue some of his parishioners with the spirit of faith, the purity of life, and the spirit of sacrifice necessary to esteem and embrace this life, gives evidence of the fact that he himself is lacking in the spirit of his

divine Master. For, when a zealous Director makes consistent efforts to lead souls to God, the Holy Ghost will inspire many of his spiritual children through his word and example to consecrate themselves in a special manner to His service. Let no Director therefore be discouraged by the waywardness and fickleness of human nature, but make the effort in a spirit of faith and confidence in the divine aid. Jesus Christ Himself advised some to embrace a life of perfection who turned a deaf ear to His invitation. He spent a whole night in prayer before selecting His Apostles, and yet one became a traitor, another basely denied Him, and all deserted Him during His passion. In spite of all this apparent failure Providence then as now used the weak to confound the strong, and the humble to lead the wise. A generous heart and a determined will are all that any one can bring to the service of God, and even these are stimulated and strengthened by His grace. As these dispositions are indispensable to do God's will in any station in life, every Confessor and Director should seek to foster them in his penitents by keeping the Christian ideal ever before them, and by exhorting the young to pray for light and guidance in the choice of their vocation. He should inspire all with a high esteem for the clerical and the religious life, and inspire those with a desire to embrace it who have the necessary qualifications. He should do all in his power to enable those to enter on the higher life who seriously entertain a desire for it, as it is then prompted by the grace of God and not by any earthly consideration.

6. PARISH ORGANIZATIONS.

Jesus Christ.

According to the opinion of commentators our Savior attracted from five to six hundred devoted followers during His public life. Instead of living in a single community, like a little parish of our day, these disciples were scattered over Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. When we reflect on the brief period of His public ministry and this scattered condition of His followers, we marvel at the organization which Jesus Christ effected in His Church, and at the number of active workers among its members. If we call to mind that His six hundred followers scarcely constituted one hundred ancient families we begin to realize that nearly every able bodied man among the disciples of our Lord must have been either an Apostle or one of the Seventy-two Disciples, and that every woman who was not detained at home by family duties probably belonged to "the holy women" who followed our Savior to minister to Him and His disciples.

If this is the correct view of conditions as they existed during the public life of our Lord we must conclude that additional responsibilities devolved on the disciples who remained at home, and that in one way or another all of our Savior's followers cooperated systematically to spread the glad tidings of salvation. To realize the necessity of this cooperation more fully it suffices to call to mind that Jesus gathered His followers from the poorer

class, and that He did not sustain them in any miraculous manner, but rather depended on their hospitality to provide for Him and His companions. We may also conclude from these facts that the ideal condition of every parish requires the hearty cooperation of all its members, and that to secure it the pastor should organize his parishioners into suitable societies of active workers.

The Apostles did this very thing. If we turn to conditions as they existed among the first Christians in Jerusalem shortly after the Ascension of our Lord, we find that the Apostles preached the glad tidings of salvation with such fervor that the first Christians were so intimately united by the bond of Christian charity that they put their temporal possessions in common. We likewise find that the Apostles, guided by the Spirit of God, ordained a body of Deacons and appointed them as a relief committee to provide for the material wants of the poor, when the exercise of the corporal works of mercy threatened to absorb their attention and draw them away from the exercise of their sacred ministry.

If we now turn to the teaching body which Jesus Christ established in His Church, we find that He exercised singular prudence in the choice of His Apostles, but especially in selecting St. Peter as His visible representative on earth. The Apostles were men inured by a life of labor and endurance to stand the physical strain of the ministry. Having but little of the goods of earth they found it easy to "leave all" and follow the Master. And

the more they witnessed the stupendous effects produced through their instrumentality by grace and the dispensations of Providence, the more were they inclined to refer the glory of their ministry to God, and acknowledge themselves to be unprofitable servants. The choice of the head, or chief pastor, was even more difficult. The tribal form of government was in vogue among the Jews, and some of the Apostles, who were relatives of our Lord, conspired for the highest places in His kingdom, and induced Salome their mother to intercede in their behalf. But Jesus disregarded both the tradition of the Jews and the personal request of James and John in selecting Peter as the visible head of His Church. Peter was a man of mature years. He had learned by sad experience to mistrust himself and to place his confidence in God alone, and by his humility, generosity, and fidelity was qualified to fill the office.

Finally, another striking feature of His Church was the autonomy given it by Jesus Christ. Having defined the object of its mission and promised the guidance of the Holy Spirit, He wisely left the Church full liberty to adapt itself to the varying circumstances of time and nationality, and gave every member of good will ample scope to utilize his energies for the glory of God and the benefit of mankind. The synagogue was formal and unbending, but the Church of Christ is divinely human because she is Catholic.

The Priest.

An infallible criterion of a pastor's success is the activity he is able to create and direct among

his parishioners for the glory of God and the welfare of souls. A hireling can preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments to those who apply for them, but a pastor, imbued with the spirit of his divine Master, will not be content with having parishioners live Catholic lives individually, but collectively. He is not the shepherd of a flock of sheep, but the pastor of intelligent, free beings with a social nature. The more thoroughly he organizes his parish and stimulates its Catholicity by inducing his parishioners to practise the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, the more does he also enable them to promote the glory of God and the salvation of mankind.

As every parish is a distinct unit it is the pastor's duty to organize it into an intelligent, active moral body according to the circumstances of its nature, and to induce it to live the Catholic life by the practice of self-denial, obedience, and fraternal charity. In proportion as the pastor organizes his parish into suitable societies and induces all his parishioners to become active members of their respective religious, charitable, beneficial and social societies, does he also foster the legitimate aspirations of all his members, and cause the entire parish to pulsate with Catholic life or activity. On the other hand, in proportion as he permits parish organization and life to stagnate does he also permit the faith of his parish to grow cold, and parish life to languish and die.

By raising marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament and declaring that "what God hath joined

together, let no man put asunder,"[1] Jesus Christ established the family as the natural bulwark, not only of the parish, but of the entire Church and of all civil society. To build up his parish the pastor must, therefore, seek to perpetuate the vigor and sanctity of domestic society by energetically opposing mixed marriage and other causes of family disunion, and by inculcating a spirit of love and sacrifice in the homes of his parishioners. If he earns the esteem and cultivates the cooperation of the men of his parish the pastor will find little difficulty in gaining the enthusiastic support of the women, or in proving himself the devoted friend of the children.

In rural districts and in the smaller urban parishes, where the people still live a simple life, a pastor may obtain excellent results in cultivating Catholic life by taking the family as the unit for promoting the religious, social, and industrial welfare of his flock. In proportion, however, as a parish grows, and the needs of the parishioners increase and multiply, the pastor should establish appropriate religious, charitable, beneficial, and social societies to maintain and promote union, harmony, and vigor in parish life. To exercise a beneficial influence these societies should have the approbation of the Church, appeal to the faithful, and enable the pastor to influence his parishioners to live Catholic lives by the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. No matter how large a city parish may be, or how unlike its members in nationality and social condition, a prudent

[1]Matt. 19, 6.

and devoted pastor can make the parish plant the religious, intellectual, charitable, beneficial, and social center of his district, and prove himself the father of all his parishioners by means of these societies.

Among the religious societies for the laity encouraged by the Church the Holy Name Society appeals in a special manner to our Catholic men, and has enabled many of them to become champions of Jesus Christ and valuable auxiliaries of their devoted pastor. The Altar and Rosary Society has done the same for the married and single women. It brings the blessing of God on the home by uniting devotion to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and devotion to the Blessed Mother of God. The Sodality of the Children of Mary has always appealed to Catholic girls and young women and proven a powerful aid in preserving their purity and in fostering their devotion. The Sacred Heart League has likewise proven itself a source of countless blessings in every parish in which it has been established. When maintained in a flourishing condition it develops an apostolic zeal and a spirit of fervor in a congregation that is indicative of the blessing of God operating through it on all its members.

No charitable institution has done more to relieve the wants of the sick and poor in our larger cities than the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Its Catholic spirit, efficient management, and practical methods have won for it the first place among charitable societies. Until such time as a city pastor can establish a branch of the St. Vincent de

Paul Society in his parish he may obtain valuable assistance in caring for the sick and destitute from a Ladies' Aid Society. This he could organize from the workers of his parish and direct according to the needs of the community.

Most of the beneficial societies of our day are not parish organizations, but fraternal societies, that aim to give the laboring classes a reasonble rate on a life insurance policy, and sometimes add sick benefits and social attractions for their members. Though there are several excellent fraternal and beneficial societies of Catholics approved by the Church, they are not parish organizations, and so will be only of secondary assistance to a pastor in building up a congregation. At best their chief interest is not parochial, but fraternal and mutually beneficial. And when a local branch is misguided by some official hostile to the pastor it may become a source of disunion in the parish.

An enlightened and zealous pastor will not content himself with religious and charitable societies in his parish. While avoiding the useless multiplication of these societies, he will seek to widen their scope, so that they will embrace all desirable features of a social and educational nature. The allurements and occasions for sin are so numerous and so varied in most cities that the pastors can not maintain their sodalities in a flourishing condition without providing their sodalists with legitimate amusement and recreation. On this account every city parish should be equipped not only with church and school buildings, but also with club and sodality rooms, where the parishioners may

cultivate the social life under the fostering influence of the Church. This social adjunct will also prove beneficial in country parishes where people have few diversions, and can easily be induced to make the church the center of their life.

A parish library can be made a great means of intellectual and moral development. It is sometimes conducted by an individual sodality, but is productive of more good when open to all parishioners. As public libraries exist in all cities, city pastors ought to arrange to have a reliable Catholic appointed on the library board who will conscientiously seek to exclude all books and periodicals dangerous to faith and morals, and provide such as will be of real benefit to the public. They should also make a catalog of the desirable books found in the public library of their city and distribute it among their parishioners to assist them in making a judicious choice in selecting books from the city library.

Every pastor should encourage athletic, as well as literary, dramatic, and musical entertainments among his young people. These always serve as a means of innocent relaxation, and may be used to promote works of zeal and mercy. Where a parish is not in financial need, pastors can use them as a means of stimulating faith, zeal, and charity by conducting them for the benefit of home or foreign missions, for the support of the orphans, for the education of poor seminarians, or for some other religious purpose. They can promote the same end by urging their Altar Societies and Sewing Circles to make clothes for the poor, and to

provide altar linen and vestments for poor, struggling parishes. And, lest they be deterred by selfish motives from encouraging such benevolent enterprises, let pastors bear in mind that their parishioners will be generous towards them in proportion as they teach them Christian zeal and generosity towards others by their own example.

Acting on the principle that, if it is Christian charity to relieve the wants of the poor, it is Christlike to help man to help himself, many pastors are doing much good by conducting free employment agencies and night schools in connection with their parish societies. Some enlarge their sphere of beneficial influence by providing popular lectures under the auspices of their parish societies, on various trades and industries in the city, and on agriculture, gardening, dairy, and stock raising in the country. Let no one ask with Cain of old: "Am I my brother's keeper?"[2] for the Catholicity of practical religion is as comprehensive as the wants of man. And we may say of social charity, even as St. James said of the works of mercy: "Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation: and to keep one's self unspotted from this world."[3]

To bring the Catholicity of a parish to perfection, pastors should be solicitous not only that their parish societies act in harmony at home and cultivate a fraternal feeling towards those of neighboring parishes, but also that they be strengthened

[2]Gen. 4, 9. [3]Jas. 1, 27.

at least by a diocesan, if not by a national and a universal union. They will see the beneficial influence of such a union by taking the Holy Name Society as an example, and studying the salutary manner in which its diocesan union reacts on the practical faith of the different parishes that participate in the Holy Name parade. The fact is that isolation tends to stagnation and deterioration in parishes as well as in individuals, and that union is a source of strength and vitality, no less by the stimulating influence which one member exercises on another, than by the mutual help which the members give and receive through their union. Humanly speaking, this Catholicity is the great source of strength in the True Church, even as too much individualism is a source of weakness and disintegration in the various denominations.

No pastor can overlook the choice of devoted workers if he is desirous of developing Catholic life in his parish. If the Savior trained His Apostles with much patience and love, the pastor should not leave the selection of the officers of his parish societies entirely to the ballot box. One unbalanced or ambitious official may disrupt his sodality, and one trustee may turn the whole parish against him. If Jesus Christ spent a whole night in prayer before selecting His Apostles, and three years in training them for their work, the least a pastor ought to do in selecting and training his workers is to exercise all his zeal and diplomacy in having suitable candidates nominated and elected to head his societies, to imbue them with a genuine Catholic spirit, to inspire their zeal, and

to direct their actions. And, if he does not wish to be seriously handicapped in conducting parochial affairs, the pastor should be proficient in parliamentary law and usages so that he may preside at business meetings in an efficient manner.

7. THE BUSINESS MANAGER.

Jesus Christ.

Actual experience is not required of the Savior to be the Model of His priest in managing a modern parish. His actions prove that He possessed the qualities of a successful manager, and applied the principles that draw down the blessing of heaven and win the cooperation of the faithful in this necessary part of a pastor's ministry. By His voluntary poverty Jesus Christ gave His priests a sublime example of detachment from material riches, which is the first requisite for them to manage their parishes successfully. Another requisite is the patience and tact He displayed in dealing with ignorant, selfish, and ambitious human nature. He never antagonized any one, but cultivated the good will of all by uniform kindness. He was dead to human respect and intrigue, but encouraged the good will of all by the judicious praise He bestowed on merit. Finally, by laboring and sacrificing Himself personally for mankind, He won His followers, and inspired them to labor and make sacrifices in their practice of religion. By this He teaches us that, if an enemy is converted into a friend by kindness, the faithful will respond to the appeal of their pastor for material cooperation in proportion as he educates them to value the treasures of grace.

The material advancement of a parish along normal lines is a necessary condition for its spiritual life and development. Some edifice and the

ministry of a priest is necessary for public worship. It is true the Savior often preached under the canopy of heaven, but it is also true that He never made any public appeal for financial aid and still the people ministered to Him and His disciples. From this we may conclude that, in proportion as a pastor makes his flock realize the necessity of saving their souls by worshipping and serving God as He has ordained, will they be animated by the faith, hope, and charity necessary to erect and maintain the best parochial buildings their means will permit. And we may also infer that, in proportion as a pastor labors and sacrifices himself in imitation of his divine Master for the people, will the people minister to his temporal wants. For it is a law of nature as well as of God that "they that serve the altar partake with the altar;" and "that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel."[1]

It is self-evident that the worshipper must provide the means of worship, and that these means must be proportionate to the solemnity with which he worships God. In early patriarchal times the head of the family provided the means and offered the sacrifice for himself and his family. But later on Abraham offered tithes to Melchisedech[2] as an appreciation of his ministry, and Jacob vowed tithes to the service of God and introduced this practice as a custom among the Israelites, who were his descendants. This custom was incorporated as a law by Moses,[3] retained by the early Christians, and emphasized as late as the sixteenth

[1] I. Cor. 9, 13-14. [2] Gen. 14, 20. [3] Levit. 27, 30-34.

century by the Council of Trent. As interpreted at present this obligation binds the faithful to contribute according to their means to the support of religion in their parish.

When "Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, He saith to them: My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves,"[4] He by no means abrogated the law on tithes and personal offerings, but emphasized the impropriety of collecting these revenues in the temple, especially during divine services. Jesus Himself required a considerable revenue to provide for His twelve Apostles and seventy-two Disciples, and the pious women who ministered unto them. And though He cured the sick and fed the hungry it is not recorded that He ever solicited any contribution from any one, or wrought miracles to support Himself and His disciples. According to the law of retribution He knew that the people would be moved to provide for Him and His assistants while they were generously laboring for the welfare of the people. "Your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things," Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."[5]

By teaching all to put their trust in Providence Jesus Christ by no means advocated shiftlessness

[4]Matt. 21, 12. [5]Matt. 6, 32-33.

and indolence. He condemned that inordinate solicitude about temporalities which obstructs the true view of life and neglects man's spiritual nature. But He expects even His priests to observe the law of labor by making a reasonable provision for their own support. It is true that Jesus directed His Apostles to share His own poverty when He sent them to prepare the way for Him. "Take nothing for your journey;" He said, "neither staff, nor scrip, nor bread, nor money."[6] But when the hour of separation approached, He said: "Now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip; and he that hath not, let him sell his coat, and buy a sword."[7] By this metaphorical language the Savior warned His Apostles of impending trials and exhorted them to make a prudent preparation to meet them, for He would no longer provide the material means of their support as He had done during the past three years.

The Priest.

To be a successful manager every pastor must avoid the appearance of personal greed in conducting the financial affairs of his parish. By saying: "You cannot serve God and mammon,"[8] Jesus Christ condemned avarice as the lowest kind of idolatry. As pastor the priest must also seek to eradicate inordinate love of money out of the hearts of the faithful to enable them to practise solid virtue, for every one must sacrifice the material things of this world in proportion as

[6]Luke 9, 3. [7]Luke 22, 36. [8]Matt. 6, 24.

he wishes to lay up treasures in heaven. In imitation of his Master, however, the pastor must inspire his flock with an appreciation of spiritual treasures and a contempt for earthly things more by his example than by his teaching. If he seeks the material things only as means of promoting the welfare of religion and develops the spiritual life of his parish with his whole heart and soul, he will find little difficulty in inducing his parishioners to open their purses as well as their hearts to him.

As people easily become suspicious about money matters, and as the parishioners must know the financial standing of their parish to take a personal interest in affairs, every pastor should give them a statement of the receipts and expenses at the end of every year. When this statement is printed and taken home for reference it has a stimulating effect on the parish receipts and imparts a sense of justice and satisfaction. To obviate painful explanations, however, the pastor should make it a matter of conscience to keep all the parish accounts and records correct and up to date. It will also contribute to his proficiency to keep his personal accounts with the same fidelity and exactness.

On the Sunday when he makes his annual statement the pastor should explain the wants of the parish for the ensuing year. Having done this with the necessary earnestness he should refrain from mentioning money matters from the pulpit again during the year except to remind the faith-

ful of their quarterly or monthly dues, or to announce some special collection or entertainment. People come to church to worship and to pray, and although God prescribes that "no one shall appear with his hands empty before the Lord: but every one shall offer according to what he hath,"[9] the pulpit should rarely be used to remind people of this duty. A more appropriate time and place will be his office when they come to pay their dues, or the individual homes of the parishioners at the time of the pastor's parochial visitation. By having this heart to heart talk with the heads of his families, the pastor will learn to know his people better and will find them in a more responsive mood.

To avoid incurring the reputation of "preaching money in church" and "begging from door to door" the pastor should speak of money matters, whether in public or in private, only when it is evidently necessary, and should do so then with clearness and emphasis so that he may avoid frequent repetition of a disagreeable subject. It is also advisable to keep the treatment of the material and of the spiritual affairs of the parish as far apart as possible so that the one may not interfere with the other. And to ensure that his remarks be always taken in good part the pastor should be conservative in defining the wants of the parish, clear in pointing out their obligations to his parishioners, and explicit in calling their attention to the intimate connection existing between

[9]Deut. 16, 16-17.

their voluntary offerings and their sincere appreciation of God's temporal and spiritual blessings.

A reasonable debt exercises a steadying and stimulating influence on a parish as well as on an individual, but an undue worry about financial affairs has a demoralizing effect. Every pastor should therefore make his plans according to the resources and good will of his parishioners and not permit his esthetic taste to influence his practical judgment. What would it profit him on the Day of Judgment if he erected an artistic church and a spacious residence but incurred so great a debt that he was unable to erect a parochial school till a whole generation of children grew up without a Catholic education? Such imprudence in management might forfeit a pastor's claim to the special blessing of heaven and dampen the piety and devotion of his parishioners.

When there is question of erecting new buildings or making extensive repairs the pastor should study the matter thoroughly before deciding on his plans lest he needlessly antagonize some of his parishioners and forfeit the good will of others. It may be necessary to make a systematic campaign in educating the people to realize the necessities of the parish as well as their personal responsibilities to prevent unnecessary friction after the work is begun. In fact, it is prudent on the part of the pastor to please the people in regard to location and other accidentals, so that they may be disposed to contribute more readily. And if they are unreasonable in their opposition to neces-

sary improvements from sordid motives it will be wiser for him to shield himself behind episcopal authority than to take a determined stand on his own initiative and run the risk of alienating their good will.

It is a difficult matter in our day to distribute the financial burdens of a parish according to the means of the parishioners. In ancient times when every man lived on the fruits of his own labors tithes were both just and practical. In our day pew-rent, subscriptions, and taxation are used with varying success as substitutes. Pew-rent ensures a definite revenue in a settled residential district, but is very burdensome to the man with a large family. Subscriptions are satisfactory in a small, representative community, but are difficult to maintain wherever the financial standing of every parishioner is not known to the rest of the parish. Taxation, assessed on the parishioners according to their actual wealth, is most just and practical when the necessary data are at hand. Wherever this method has been employed the city or county assessor's records have been consulted for the financial rating of the parishioners.

Some city pastors as well as those in charge of summer resorts have even a more difficult problem to solve. Their congregations are often made up of a large percentage of transients who have no personal interest in the parish and at times but little interest in religion. As they come and go time rarely permits the pastor to form their personal acquaintance and enlighten them on their

obligation. His only chance of addressing them in many instances is in the church. He must either explain conditions to them from the pulpit or hand them a printed statement in which he brings home to them their obligation of paying Sunday pew-rent or seat money, and of contributing according to their means in the collection, that the church may be maintained and services held for their convenience. Pastors of such churches should take particular pains to educate a corps of tactful ushers to collect the Sunday dues and offerings so that order and harmony may ever be maintained.

A pastor's success as manager will depend in a great measure on his selection of trustees and ushers. The right men will render him valuable assistance and relieve him of much responsibility. The wrong men, like Judas, may yield to the temptation of dishonesty, or cause him much trouble by their neglect and mismanagement. In parishes incorporated according to the laws of the State the pastor must exercise special tact to have men elected as trustees who will act in harmony with him for the best interests of the parish. In no case, even where the treasurer gives bonds, is it wise for him to surrender the entire financial management of his parish to the trustees. The Apostles did not even do that in assigning their work to the Deacons. Besides, the early history of the Church in America furnishes us with several lamentable examples of the extremes to which trustee management may be carried by selfish and deluded men. A prudent pastor will superintend both the

collection and the disbursement of parish funds, and give no man an occasion to be unjust to the parish or to treat any one with harshness. He will give a receipt for money received and carefully file the receipts for money expended. By being exact in his accounts the pastor will inspire confidence in his administration and avoid much unnecessary trouble.

In the Catholic Church rich and poor receive the same blessings of the redemption. Though all are bound to contribute according to their means to the support of religion in their parish, those who share the poverty of the Savior are exempted and become the honorary members of the parish. A devoted pastor will always find a way of permitting the poor to occupy their sittings gratis without publishing the fact to the rest of the congregation. If he has reason to suspect that any of his parishioners are in straitened circumstances he will not humiliate them needlessly by waiting for them to confess their poverty, but will investigate their condition privately and treat them in the spirit of his divine Master. By proving himself the friend of the poor a pastor will be esteemed by God and man and inspire his flock to practise the works of mercy.

Many pastors are compelled by necessity to augment their revenues by bazaars, entertainments, and socials. When properly conducted these gatherings also stimulate parochial life and prevent mixed marriages. Modern promiscuous dances are

most dangerous to Catholic morals, and forbidden by the Church. Pastors cannot hold dances for the benefit of religion or be present at them. The frivolous frequent the dance hall, but the truly religious are ever ready "to help the church."

V.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE MEDIATOR.

1. HOME LIFE.

Jesus Christ.

The dwelling of the Holy Family was a simple, plain building. Though it sheltered the most exalted personages in the history of the world there was nothing about its exterior to distinguish it from the dwellings of the poorer class that surrounded it. Upon entering it we find the furniture scant and primitive, and the meals served most frugal. But the atmosphere that pervades this dwelling has made it the model for every Christian home. Here the peace of security and familiar intercourse was rendered ideal by the sincerity, charity, cheerfulness, cordiality, patience, and spirit of sacrifice of all its inhabitants. In this hollowed place Joseph presided in all humility, Mary ministered with a delicate charm, "and Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men."[1]

In His infinite wisdom and holiness Jesus selected a virgin Mother, full of grace, not only to guide His infant steps and watch over His youth, but also to preside over His home during His public life. When Jesus moved to Capharnaum at the beginning of His public ministry Mary accompanied Him. In proportion as the number of His disciples grew and her labors increased Mary selected and trained the pious women that followed Jesus from Galilee to minister to His apostolic

[1]Luke 2, 52.

family. Under her wise and gentle supervision these performed their labor of love with the greatest modesty and reserve. For, though neither they nor the Apostles and Disciples were then confirmed in grace, the integrity of their conduct was so evident that not even the bitterest enemies of the Master dared to impugn the virtue of any of His followers.

Though the Scriptures are silent on the details of the Savior's home life, we may picture them with reasonable precision when we consider them as the perfection of what Jewish law and custom ordained. Man has always acknowledged his dependence on God by prayer, sacrifice, and divine praise. Moses emphasized private prayer and public sacrifice, and David taught the people how to sing the praises of the Lord in Psalms that still raise the mind and heart of man to God. With this impetus given to their natural promptings all observers of the Mosaic Law recited vocal prayers three times a day, as we read for example of Daniel the prophet, while the more devout, like the Psalmist, praised God seven times a day.[2] From this we may infer that private and family prayer, the singing of Psalms and Canticles, and the reading of the Scriptures, were a permanent part of the Savior's life at Nazareth as well as at Capharnaum.

As the Jews were devoted to agricultural and pastoral pursuits the Holy Family not only lived

[2]Ps. 118, 164.

on their own products but also made their own furniture and clothing from material they raised. If we call to mind the general depression of the country which resulted from the Roman occupation and taxation, as well as the impoverished condition of the Holy Family, we must conclude that Jesus assisted Mary and Joseph in their daily labor at an early age, and after the death of His foster-father supported His Mother by the skill of His own hands. It is, therefore, no mere fancy to picture Jesus as a child assisting Mary in the care of the home and the garden, or in spinning flax and wool and weaving the threads into cloth, or as a young man assisting Joseph in the workshop, and as gradually replacing him when the feebleness of old age rendered it impossible for him to continue his labors.

Being inured to a simple life by the poverty of His childhood and the struggle for an honest livelihood when a young man Jesus had few personal wants all the days of His life. During His public life He was so absorbed in gaining souls that at times He even neglected His own meals and repose. No matter where we study His life, in fact, whether in the privacy of Nazareth, at Capharnaum, or on His missionary journeys, we find this forgetfulness of His personal wants and His thoughtfulness of others characteristic of Jesus Christ. When the disciples of John came to ask Him if He were the Christ, He could therefore point to the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaias as evidence, and say: "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are

cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them."[3]

The Priest.

To be a home for the pastor and his assistants the parochial residence must be a haven of rest for them from the turmoil of active life, where they may lay aside external reserve and enjoy the peace of security and congeniality without fear of intrusion. It must be a sanctuary in which they can renew themselves in the spirit of their Master and recite their prayers without distraction. It must be a study in which they can acquire the knowledge necessary for the exercise of their ministry. And it must be a place where they can take innocent recreation without fear of giving scandal, and where their bodily wants can be supplied without detriment to their ministry or to their virtue.

The parochial residence should be planned to meet these requirements of the pastor and his assistants. It should be constructed according to the means of the parish but reflect the simplicity of the Master and not the pride of the world. Its interior should be divided into three distinct parts: office, residence proper, and servants' quarters, and should be connected by hallways and stairs in a way to ensure the greatest amount of freedom and privacy to all its occupants. A location near the church and somewhat removed from the street and from neighboring houses adds to the convenience and security of the priests. The

[3]Matt. 11, 5.

decorations should be of a religious nature, and the furniture should be plain and durable rather than elegant to be appropriate for the home of the mediator between God and man.

For many obvious reasons a pastor should exercise the greatest prudence in the selection of his housekeeper. As she must necessarily enter into the home life of the parochial residence her very presence must be edifying and her conduct irreprehensible. She must be of mature years to comply with the laws of the Church, be neat to keep the house in order, economical in the household expenses, and a good cook to serve wholesome food. She should be of a retiring disposition to keep gossips out of the house, cheerful to stand the strain of isolation, sensible to know how to keep her place, tactful in meeting visitors, and pious to love her life of sacrifice. If the pastor has a mother or sister who possesses these qualifications, he should select her in preference to all other applicants. If he must select his housekeeper from among strangers he should above all avoid lightminded, frivolous, insincere, meddlesome, domineering, and irascible characters. In our day the person who would conduct an efficient training school for priests' housekeepers would confer a permanent blessing on the clergy. And the pastor who would encourage a woman with the necessary qualifications to seek this position and provide her with the necessary recommendation, would do a great favor to a brother priest.

The laws of the Church define the manner in which the priest is to perform his apostolic labors,

and lay down certain principles and regulations for his private life. Every pastor who wishes to form his daily conduct on the example of his divine Model must apply these to his personal circumstances by means of a practical rule of life. This rule should regulate the furnishing and running of the house, define the order of daily life in his home, the office hours for the parishioners, and the time for divine services and for other priestly labors. It should make him a model of clerical dress and appearance, of sobriety at table, and of simplicity, integrity, and amiability in his daily conduct. By being a model of regularity and moderation in all things he will secure the harmony and tranquillity of home life in the parochial residence.

Every pastor is aware that the future of a priest, his own progress in virtue, the peace of his home, and the spiritual welfare of his parish, depend in a great measure on his conduct towards his assistant. One of his most important rules of life should therefore be to treat his assistant with justice, fairness, and Christian charity. Justice demands that the pastor give his assistant a reasonable amount of work and define it sufficiently in advance for him to prepare to perform it well, that he provide the assistant with suitable meals and lodging and pay him his salary promptly, and that he uphold him in the authority he has delegated to him and defend his conduct and good name. He should show his fairmindedness by making due allowance for the assistant's temperament, age, character and experience, and his

charity by encouraging him in his apostolic labors, by readily granting him every reasonable privilege, and by treating him with the esteem and affection of an elder brother.

It is a great blessing for a young and inexperienced priest to be initiated into the sacred ministry by one who has labored successfully in the vineyard of the Lord. His success in after life will depend in a great measure on the habits he forms on entering active service. He is apt to be an idealist on leaving the seminary and to need the perspective of experience to obtain the correct view of the labors of the sacred ministry. He is also apt to mistake the vigor of youth and the fascination of active work for true zeal of the Lord till he has been tested in the crucible of actual service. We may say that he is like a child that has been told how to walk but has not yet learned to stand without support. At this stage he is apt to shrink into inertia through fear, plunge through desperation, or be too mechanical in his efforts to do much good without the special protection of Providence or the influence of an experienced co-laborer.

Under the guidance of his pastor he can avoid many mistakes and easily repair those he makes. But if he were to start his apostolic labors as pastor, his mistakes might accompany him through life because he had no one to call his attention to them, or direct him in harmonizing the theory and practice of the sacred ministry.

A prudent assistant will adapt himself to the life in the rectory and the requirements of the

pastor in the parish. Instead of arranging affairs to suit his own taste he will concentrate his energy on the work assigned to him and perform it as planned by the pastor. He will esteem the pastor for his age, position, and merit, show him every mark of respect, and perform his apostolic labors under his direction and guidance. He will uphold the pastor's authority and good name, and inform him of parochial affairs that interest him in a special manner or require his personal attention. He will make due allowance for the pastor's peculiarities, and yield to his opinions and desires in all things that are not evidently sinful rather than disturb the peace and tranquillity of home life or offend against authority and fraternal charity.

A priest must ever be mindful of his dignity and do nothing unbecoming the representative of Christ in his home. Both pastor and assistants should be kind and benevolent towards the housekeeper and yet maintain their reserve and discretion. They should never make her their confidant nor be indebted to her by borrowing from her or by neglecting to pay her salary promptly. As head of the house the pastor should insist on order, decorum, and regularity, provide for the needs of the establishment, and see that the household affairs are conducted on a just and economical basis. His management of the home reflects on his pastoral labors, for "if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"[4] As pastor it is his duty to watch over the conduct of his servants, to keep them from

[4] I. Tim. 3, 5.

frequenting places or associating with persons that would cast a reflection on his ministry, and encourage them to live a life of piety and devotion, without however assuming the responsibility of being their confessor.

The common interests of religion require every priest to extend the spirit of concord and charity beyond the limits of his own home to the neighboring parishes and even to the entire diocese in which he labors. As the priests of the different deaneries and dioceses constitute the official families of their respective deans and bishops they should labor in harmony, to the edification of the faithful and their mutual advantage, in promoting the interests of religion. In a spirit of brotherly toleration they should overlook one another's defects, uphold the good name of the priesthood by word and deed, and generously assist one another by sympathy in trials, by counsel in difficulties, and by deeds in necessities. In this brotherly spirit every pastor should extend a cordial welcome to visiting priests, and instruct his housekeeper to admit them to his study and to treat them as members of his household, instead of detaining them in his office to await his arrival.

2. THE INTERIOR LIFE.

Jesus Christ.

We distinguish a human and a divine activity in Jesus Christ. However, as His human nature always acted in perfect harmony with His divine nature, His activity always proceeded from the same interior principles. No mere creature ever understood man's obligation to glorify God as Jesus did, nor was ever any one so inflamed with love for Him, nor did any one realize so perfectly that the test of our love for God is conformity to His holy will. On account of His grasp of these principles Jesus Christ regulated both His interior and His exterior conduct in perfect conformity with the will of His heavenly Father and proved Himself the Model of every virtue.

Although His actions were theandric, or divinely human, Jesus Christ took as much precaution against the perverse influence of the flesh, the world, and the devil as though He were the weakest of mortals. He indeed ministered to the wants of His body, but He contented Himself with the bare necessities of food, rest, and clothing, labored so hard, and applied Himself so incessantly that He did not need to say with St. Paul: "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection."[1] He despised the esteem as well as the scorn of the world, and declared it had nothing in common with Him. And He manifested His contempt for Satan not only by calling him a murderer and a

[1] I. Cor. 9, 27.

liar,[2] but especially by resolutely turning from his evil suggestions and overwhelming him with confusion.

When we consider the sincerity, generosity, and fervor with which He fulfilled His mission of giving "glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will,"[3] we scarcely know whether to admire the prayers, the labors, or the sufferings of Jesus Christ most, as they were all prompted by the same love, governed by the same docility, directed to the same sublime end, and performed with the same recollection, decision, and attention to details that unite to produce a perfect work. It is only when we consider the life of Jesus Christ as the work of the atonement that the Sacrifice of Calvary looms up as the perfection and consummation of His mission. And though the crucifixion and death of the God-Man was singled out by the special design of the Almighty as the redemptive act, every one of His actions was simply perfect, and every theandric action of infinite, meritorious value.

In all His labors and sufferings Jesus Christ sought only the accomplishment of His Father's will. In consequence of His fidelity He was so conscious of the rectitude of His conduct that He could confidently challenge His enemies and ask: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?"[4] Prompted by the same knowledge of His perfection and merit He proposed Himself as the Teacher and Model of all of good will, and urged

[2]John 8, 44. [3]Luke 2, 14. [4]John 8, 46.

them to imitate His example. "Come to Me," He said, "all ye that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is sweet and My burden light."[5]

Though He knew that the things that "come forth from the heart,"[6] defile or perfect a man, Jesus Christ emphasized meekness and humility as the foundation of the spiritual life, because these virtues enable man to find rest by establishing him in peace with himself, with God, and with his neighbor. Meekness makes man master of himself, disposes him to know, love, and serve God by checking his anger and rebellion against truth and discipline, and puts him in a tolerant, conciliatory, and benevolent disposition towards his neighbor. And humility makes man realize His utter dependence on God, and prompts him to be patient with himself and with his neighbor, to submit himself to the influence of grace by prayer, and to cooperate with it by laboring and enduring to promote God's honor and glory and the sanctification of mankind according to His holy designs.

The Priest.

Every Christian must adopt the principles of Jesus Christ not only in theory but also in practice, to live an interior life. To be an Alter Christus and live a life of perfection the priest must be dead to all promptings of corrupt nature and be

[5]Matt. 11, 28-30. [6]Matt. 15, 18.

actuated solely by the principles of his divine Master. Though it is the duty of every creature to promote the glory of God and the happiness of mankind, it becomes the special duty of the priest by his ordination and of every pastor by his appointment. The priest should therefore purify his intention daily from the dross of pride, and self-complacency, and seek the opportunity of doing the little good the Lord expects. He should likewise purify his motive from all inordinate self-love and expand his heart with generosity, for Christ is not only to abide in him but to work through him in promoting the glory of God and the sanctification of souls. Finally, as the priest must perform his duties in the sacred ministry on his own initiative, he must be ever on his guard against the delusions of self-will to perform them well. In the seminary he was told what to do; in the sacred ministry he must teach others by his example. As a rule ignorance is pardonable in the laity, and self-will a defect, but ignorance of his dignity and duties is a scandal in a priest, and contempt for authority and self-will in the exercise of the sacred ministry alienates him from Jesus Christ. The priest must, therefore, make the will of God, as made known to him by the laws of the Church and the voice of his superiors, his will if he does not wish to hear the Master say to him: "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."[7] He must meditate to think the thoughts of God. He must meditate to love the goodness of God.

[7] Matt. 11, 24.

He must meditate to surrender himself unreservedly to God and to live in Jesus Christ. For as the moon dispels the darkness of night only by reflecting the light of the sun, so the priest becomes "the light of the world" not so much by proclaiming the truths of Jesus Christ in the pulpit, as by living them in his public and private life. And the more he is concerned about his Father's business will he abide in Christ and Christ in him.

Though Jesus was "made in the likeness of man, and in habit formed as a man,"[8] He was not impeded in His union with His heavenly Father by the perverse inclinations of corrupt human nature. These, man must overcome to surrender himself to the influence of grace, and to be actuated by the principles of Jesus Christ. "If any man will come after Me," therefore says the Master, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."[9] But the priest cannot content himself to follow Christ from afar, like the lepers in the Gospel. As mediator between God and man he should live Christ even in the minutest details of his daily life. Before he can say with St. Paul: "I so run, not as at an uncertainty: I so fight, not as one beating the air,"[10] he must also be able to say with him: "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway."[11] He must guard against the delusions of pride, self-love, and self-will. He may

[8]Phil. 2, 7. [9]Luke 9, 23. [10]I. Cor. 9, 26.
[11]I. Cor. 9, 27.

indeed stretch a point of the law at times in favor of a repentant sinner, but he should be severe with himself and not content himself with a mere probability in the practice of virtue or in the discharge of his sacred duties.

In the seminary the priest was taught to love retirement, to live a plain, simple, industrious, methodical life, and to be cheerful, docile, faithful, and patient. If he recognized Christ in this ideal and permitted himself then to be formed to His likeness, he understands that the active ministry does not free a true mediator from restraint but only transfers the deterring influence from the seminary authorities to his own conscience. And in proportion as he has interiorly yielded to the discipline of the seminary has he also imbibed the spirit of his divine Master and Model and thus prepared himself to live a life of atonement himself while making others realize that the Master's "yoke is sweet and His burden light." In proportion as he has formed his conscience along these lines will the priest make the interests of Jesus Christ his own, be actuated by His spirit, and consider the voice of his superiors and the laws of the Church the manifestation of God's adorable will in his regard.

Man finds many difficulties in living an interior life. His mind is shrouded in ignorance, prejudice, and error. His natural conceit gives him an aversion for the salutary truths of religion, while his fickleness and rashness relish the maxims and false principles of the world. To make matters worse his heart hankers after the enjoyments

of life, like the Israelites of old hankered after the flesh pots of Egypt, and his self-will cries out with Lucifer: "Non serviam!" Even his instinct and memory are polluted and his spiritual perceptions dulled by his corrupt and carnal nature. To counteract these perverse tendencies and submit himself unreservedly to the influence of grace to do the will of God, man must form the habit of reflection and introspection to learn his true relationship with his Maker, the habit of self-discipline to bring himself in conformity with it, and the habit of humble, persevering prayer to live in union with Jesus Christ.

If the trial of life imposes these obligations on all mankind it stands to reason that a priest must practise them with the greatest fidelity to be an Alter Christus. For him daily meditation, daily examination, and daily union with Jesus Christ are essential in promoting the glory of God and the welfare of mankind. In proportion as he were to grow negligent in their practice would self-love supplant the fear and the love of God in his heart, self-interest take the place of God's interests in his judgment, and self-will supersede the will of God as the rule of his conduct. And thus, instead of being the pillar of truth, the light of the world, and the salt of the earth, he would deteriorate into "a reed shaken with the wind."[12]

It is true the labors of the ministry at times interfere with the interior life of the priest, especially when he takes a selfish, shortsighted

[12]Matt. 11, 7.

view of life. He must perform the one without neglecting the other. He must save his soul as a priest. If the labors of the ministry oblige him to leave God to work for God, the law of self-preservation should prompt him to seek God in his work and to make up for external devotion by interior union with Jesus and Mary. For, unless he seeks to reproduce Jesus Christ in his daily life, the priest may fall lower than Judas Iscariot. Let him never forget that the "servant who knew the will of his Lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes,"[13] and "unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required: and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more."[14] To maintain the interior life of an Alter Christus the priest must ever be strong in faith, unwavering in his loyalty to Jesus and Mary, fervent in prayer, generous and self-sacrificing in the sacred ministry, and animated by a boundless confidence in the mercy of God, in the merits of Jesus Christ, in the power of Mary, and in the radical sincerity and good will of mankind. In proportion as he mediates between God and man in this spirit will he experience and witness the triumph of grace on the one hand, and be forced to say with the Apostles on the other: "We are unprofitable servants,"[15] for Christ is then laboring in him and through him for his own perfection and the sanctification of the souls entrusted to his care.

[13]Luke 12, 47. [14]Luke 12, 48. [15]Luke 17, 10.

3. A LIFE OF STUDY.

Jesus Christ.

When the Son of God became man "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man, and in habit found as a man."[1] And, though He was the God of infinite wisdom He acquired human knowledge by observation and study like the rest of mankind. Unlike ordinary mortals, however, He was deterred in the pursuit of knowledge neither by the consequences of original sin, nor by any personal defects. Possessing the integrity of human nature Jesus Christ experienced neither difficulty nor weariness in concentrating His mental faculties on the most abstract subjects, in grasping every truth in all its bearings, or in retaining the knowledge He acquired as He advanced in years.

Without drawing on the infinite treasures of His divine omniscience Jesus Christ was thus perfectly endowed for the acquisition of human knowledge, and even as an infant gave evidence of unusual intelligence. For, "the child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom, and the grace of God was in Him."[2] According to the custom of the Jews Jesus was first taught by Mary and Joseph, and then frequented the school of the synagogue at Nazareth for several years before He accompanied His parents to Jerusalem to celebrate the pasch. When we bear in mind that Mary was the best of human teachers and that the divine Child was

[1] Phil. 2, 7. [2] Luke 2, 40.

devoted to prayer and reflection we are not surprised that all who were present when Mary and Joseph found Him in the midst of the doctors in the temple, "were astonished at His wisdom and His answers."[3]

St. Paul exhorted the Romans "not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety."[4] Solomon, though reputed the wisest of men, was not wise unto sobriety, but, being puffed up with pride, fell away from God. Jesus Christ, however, was wise unto sobriety and used His knowledge to promote the glory of His heavenly Father and the welfare of mankind. He became the great Teacher of mankind by the soundness, the breadth, and the practicability of His doctrine and the personal sanctity of His own life He brought the sublimest truths of religion down to the comprehension of ignorant minds, and frustrated the conspiracies of His astute enemies as though they were the childish plots of a kindergarten. In fact the multitude wondered no less at His wisdom than at His miracles. "How came this man by this wisdom and miracles?" they asked. "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Jude?"[5]

If we inquire more closely into the knowledge which Jesus manifested as man, we find that it was preeminently of a practical nature. He not only possessed a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, of theology, and of the Law of Moses, but

[3]Luke 2, 47. [4]Rom. 12, 3. [5]Matt. 13, 54-55.

knew human nature so thoroughly that He was always able to adapt His language and conduct to suit the requirements of His listeners. The axiom "to err is human" never applied to the words or to the conduct of this Shepherd of souls. He showed the fallacy of their arguments to the Sadducees with the same mastery as He disclosed their misconception of the Scriptures to the Scribes and Pharisees. But to all that were sincere and of good will Jesus revealed the treasures of divine love and mercy in a way that made them realize that His yoke was sweet, indeed, and His burden light.[6]

Not content with the theoretical knowledge of books Jesus Christ studied the problem of life, and especially the redemption and sanctification of mankind, in all its bearings. For years He divided His time in the seclusion of Nazareth between labor and meditation, praying all the while for light and guidance as though He were the lowliest of the children of men. After such a life of study and prayer Jesus Christ was enabled, humanly speaking, to fulfil every jot and tittle of the Law and the Prophets in His own person, and to enlighten and guide mankind on the way to true happiness more effectually than if He possessed the combined knowledge and experience of past ages.

Finally, if we consider the personality of Jesus Christ we find that He surpassed all mankind in those qualities that fitted Him to be the profoundest Scholar and the greatest Teacher in

[6]Matt. 11, 30.

the world. He was simple in His habits as well as in His teaching. What could be more simple, for example, than those parables of the Savior, that have been a constant light and an inspiration to all of good will? What could be more sincere than His life and His word? His zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of mankind imparted that unction to His words which touched the hearts of the greatest sinners, so that "the people were in admiration at His doctrine, for He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees."[7] And this unction of the Savior's words was seconded no less by the integrity of His personal conduct than by the miracles He wrought in confirmation of His mission.

The Priest.

The priest must possess knowledge, wisdom, and prudence in a high degree "to do and to teach"[8] in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Unlike his divine Model he is impeded in their acquisition as well as in their use by the consequences of original sin. This has weakened and impaired his mental vision, obscured and narrowed his perception, and permitted self-will and self-love to render his judgment fickle, curious, rash, and obstinate. It has weakened and defiled his memory and imagination, and has left his lower nature teeming with rebellion against the dictates of right reason. Under these disadvantages it took the priest years of self-discipline, prayer, and study to pass his

[7]Matt. 7, 28-29. [8]Acts 1, 1.

final examinations, but a lifetime of application will not give him the proficiency of the Master in the science of salvation.

As mediator between God and man the priest must possess the threefold knowledge: of God, of man, and of the means of bringing man to live in union with God. If he knows not the treasures of God's goodness, love, and mercy, and the frailty of human nature, he will be mechanical in the exercise of his sacred ministry, and fail either through rigorism or laxity. If he has not learned to form a sound, Catholic judgment he will act arbitrarily, to the prejudice of the interests of God and man. And if he does not weigh the concrete circumstances of questions presented for his decision he will be a vain theorizer instead of a practical guide of souls.

Christian philosophy and dogmatic and mystic theology teach the priest the nature and operations of man and of God. Moral, pastoral, and ascetic theology, sacred liturgy, and canon law enlighten him on the means of bringing man to live in union with God. Sacred Scripture, Church history, a devout life, and a knowledge of the world enable him to be "wise as serpents and simple as doves"[9] in the exercise of his sacred ministry. And common sense, the Lives of the Saints, the writings of the Doctors of the Church, Canon law, true zeal, and his own experience will enable him to exercise that prudence which is so essential in a mediator between God and man.

[9] Matt. 10, 16.

In proportion as the priest appreciates his sublime vocation and strives to be a devoted mediator between God and man will he also realize the necessity of living a life of study. It is true that he was grounded in the essential studies of the sacred ministry during his seminary course. Unless these studies are constantly renewed, however, they will gradually fade from his memory. Besides, his life in the seminary did not permit him to obtain even an outline of all the branches that would contribute to his success in the ministry. The priest must therefore live a life of study not only to acquire additional knowledge but even to retain what he has already acquired. It is to his advantage to possess a fund of general information, but he should consider himself bound by his office to be proficient in all branches that are classed as priestly studies.

Every man has a limited amount of energy. If he does not use it for a good purpose he will squander it aimlessly or misuse it deliberately. In his rule of life the priest should have a place for study as well as a place for prayer, the one to fit himself for his office, the other to unite himself daily to his divine Master, that he may labor and endure as a true Alter Christus. If he consumes all his energy in external labors he will deteriorate intellectually and spiritually. If he does not find time for study and prayer during his busy days he will soon devote his leisure hours to his own ease and comfort, and substitute the daily papers and popular magazines for his priestly studies, and eventually be tempted to

forsake his priestly life six days in the week to consume his energy in worldly pleasure. Even though the stress of his active labors may keep him from his books for a time, the priest must consider a life of study and reflection essential to his own spiritual progress as well as to the advancement of the cause of Jesus Christ.

No matter how preoccupied a priest may be with other work his sacred office obliges him to devote sufficient time to study to remain familiar with the more practical duties of the sacred ministry. Every priest should aim to be an expert on the treatises *de Poenitentia* and *de Matrimonio,* and should prepare his sermons and instructions with special care to make them appropriate and effective. He will find valuable help in maintaining his proficiency by being a devoted reader of one or more clerical magazines especially of those published in his own country. In preparing his discourses he will do better by taking the Sermon on the Mount for his inspiration than by taking the masters of any other age or people for his guide in sacred eloquence. Christ's words apply to all people, and His style is characterized by a simplicity, clearness, and unction that have never been equalled. The discourses of the celebrated pulpit orators on the other hand were adapted in matter and style to a class that is dead and gone. Every priest that meditates seriously on the truths of religion, that has the love of God in his heart, and that expresses his thoughts and sentiments in simple language can prepare and deliver a more appropriate sermon of his own than he can

find by rummaging through many sermon books for an appropriate discourse.

A priest's library indicates his character and life even as his mirror reflects his features. A select clerical library ordinarily indicates that the priest is living a priestly life and striving after priestly ideals. But if we enter a priest's library where the shelves are covered with novels and other profane books to the exclusion of more serious works, we should not be guilty of rash judgment in concluding that he is shallow minded and worldly at heart. The Savior says: "Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also."[10] It is related in the life of St. Jerome that an angel appeared to him when he was still passionately fond of reading Cicero, and asked him: "What art thou?" "I am a Christian," replied Jerome. "Thou art not," corrected the angel, as he proceeded to administer a severe corporal chastisement to the future saint, "Thou art only a Ciceronian, for where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also."

In building up his private library as well as in mastering its contents the priest should follow the axiom, "first what is necessary, then what is useful, and finally what is merely entertaining." If he is ambitious of attaining any preeminence he should review the studies of his seminary course during the first years of his active labors and spend as much time as possible in writing his sermons. He may be called upon, even before he acquires proficiency as a confessor and preacher,

[10]Matt. 6, 21.

to direct sodalities, charitable and social undertakings, and to conduct catechetical instructions. In proportion as his wants multiply let him add the best books on special subjects to his text-books. In this way he will avoid useless expense and learn to specialize in all the branches of the sacred ministry. Without going beyond his income every priest may thus acquire a finished education and a select library before many years.

No matter what other books a priest may select for his library, in addition to his text-books he should not omit: The Catholic Encyclopedia, The Summa of St. Thomas, The Moral Theology and Praxis Confessarii of St. Alphonsus, a Commentary on Episcopal Faculties, the latest authority on Matrimony, a copy of the decrees of the Council of Trent, of the Plenary Councils, and of the Diocesan Synods, and a Scriptural Concordance. Besides these reference books to assist him in his ministerial labors, a priest ought to have the best works of spiritual writers and the lives of missionary saints to stimulate and nourish his own piety and devotion. Having thus provided himself with food for his own soul and equipped himself for his ministry, let every priest add such other books to his library as he finds helpful in promoting the cause to which he has consecrated his life.

4. FRIENDS AND RECREATION.

Jesus Christ.

Though He loved all mankind with the love of friendship and benevolence Jesus Christ considered only those as friends who reciprocated His love and sought to establish and spread His kingdom on earth. Thus He considered Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary, and the other holy women, who ministered to the wants of the apostolic family, His friends. But in a fuller sense of the word He called the Apostles friends. "I will not now call you servants," He said to them, "for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends: because all things whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you."[1]

If He was affable, serene, and self-sacrificing in manifesting His friendship and benevolence for all mankind, Jesus became truly confiding, cordial and considerate in His dealings with His Apostles. "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God," He said in explaining the parable of the sower, "but to them that are without, all things are done in parables."[2] Again He said to the Apostles at the Last Supper: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you."[3] And when He considered their infirmity Jesus said: "I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit

[1]John 15, 15. [2]Mark 4, 11. [3]Luke 22, 15.

of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth."[4] Jesus was patient with their ignorance and rudeness, oblivious of their faults, sympathetic with them in their difficulties, and generous in their praise. He was ever ready to enlighten, to counsel, and to defend His Apostles, to abide in their company, and to remember them in His prayers. "Father, I pray for them whom Thou hast given Me," He prayed before entering on His passion and death, "that they may be one as we also are one, and that where I am they also may be with Me."[5]

Of all His disciples, however, Mary His Mother was the dearest friend of Jesus. She loved Him more than the rest of mankind and cooperated most intimately in the work of the redemption. It is not surprising, therefore, that Jesus loved her more than all the Apostles and that He planned the work of the redemption in such a way that He could spend thirty years in her company while He spent only three years with His disciples. Who will describe the loving intimacy that existed between Jesus and His blessed Mother? Much is contained in the words of St. Luke: "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them."[6] But this does not describe the sincere affection that united the Holy Family on earth. What tender affection, what thoughtful anticipation, what fond devotion, united the Holy Family in a life of labor and privation! Though Jesus was Lord and God He sought only to repay by docility and affection the

[4]John 16, 12-13. [5]John 17. [6]Luke 2, 51.

debt of gratitude to Mary and Joseph. And even during the arduous cares of His public life Jesus not only kept in touch with Mary but continued to show her the same affection which He had manifested towards her at Nazareth. He anticipated the time of miracles to please her.[7] He provided for her in death,[8] appeared first to her after His resurrection, and crowned her eventually as Queen of Heaven.

As Jesus possessed the integrity of human nature His constitution was immune to disease and His mental powers were most vigorous and well balanced. Throughout His life He united physical and mental activity, wasted no energy, and lived His daily life in peaceful conformity to the plan of His heavenly Father. Though He required nourishment and repose Jesus had fewer bodily wants and stood less in need of recreation than the rest of mankind. He often found His recreation in blessing little children[9] and in other works of zeal and piety. "I have meat to eat, which you know not,"[10] He said to the Apostles when they found Him refreshed after converting the Samaritan woman. At Nazareth He found His recreation after the toil of the day was over in spending the evening in the company of Mary and Joseph. During His public life the Evangelists tell us Jesus at times spent the whole night in prayer.[11]

The Priest.

Unless a priest is a member of some Religious

[7]John 2, 8. [8]John 19, 27. [9]Mark 10, 14.
[10]John 4, 32. [11]Luke 6, 12.

Order he does not enjoy the advantages of community life like Jesus and His Apostles, but is destined to carry the burdens of the ministry alone. He is the solitary sentinel on the watch-tower proclaiming divine truth, the shepherd leading his flock on the narrow way, the representative of Jesus Christ aiding his parishioners to live a Christian life. As the priest possesses neither the integrity nor the sanctity of his divine Master, he is in constant danger of losing the equilibrium of his mind and heart, and craves for human sympathy and companionship. He needs a friend with whom he can visit from time to time, who can enter into his labors and trials, who can counsel and advise him. "A faithful friend is a strong defense: and he that hath found him, hath found a treasure," says the Wise Man. "Nothing can be compared to a faithful friend, and no weight of gold and silver is able to countervail the goodness of his fidelity."[12]

As persons will never be wanting who will seek to use others to promote their selfish ends great prudence must be exercised in the choice of a friend. "For there is a friend of his own occasion," says the Wise Man, "and he will not abide in the day of thy trouble. And there is a friend that turneth to enmity; and there is a friend that will disclose hatred and strife and reproaches. And there is a friend a companion at the table, and he will not abide in the day of distress."[13] In proportion as a priest has imbibed the meekness and simplicity of his divine Master, and is

[12]Eccli. 6, 14-15. [13]Eccli. 6, 8-10.

filled with His zeal, is he also marked out as the legitimate prey of false friends. He should therefore unite the wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove in dealing with mankind, and never permit himself to be influenced by the mere word of any one, or admit any one to his confidence whom he has not first tested. "If thou wouldst get a friend, try him before thou takest him, and do not credit him easily."[14]

Every pastor must seek the friendship of his parishioners to promote the welfare of religion. He should show himself appreciative and grateful to all who second his efforts by material assistance or personal service. He should beware, however, of giving them too much of his confidence or otherwise putting himself in their power. "For by whom a man is overcome, of the same also is he the slave."[15] Every priest should likewise prove himself friendly towards all priests and religious by upholding their good name and authority. He should do this especially for his neighbors and be ever ready to render them any service compatible with his own duties.

A prudent man will hesitate to give his confidence or to seek advice indiscriminately. He will strive to be at peace with many, but let one of a thousand be his counsellor.[16] Among the circle of his clerical friends every priest can find one or the other congenial spirit in whom he can confide, and in whose friendship he can find the consolation of human sympathy, wise counsel, and the encouragement he needs to walk in the footsteps of

[14]Eccli. 6, 7. [15]II. Petr. 2, 19. [16]Eccli. 6, 6.

his divine Master. Let him not be oversolicitous in finding that friend and cultivating his friendship, however. Let him rather be solicitous at all times about serving God with an upright mind and generous heart, for "he that feareth God, shall likewise have good friendship: because according to him shall his friend be."[17]

The average pastor who adheres to his rule of life, finds much recreation in the discharge of his daily duties. He maintains his piety by his private devotions and the services of the Church, and finds relaxation by arranging his hours of study and of parochial visitation to refresh him after his occupation in the confessional and in the classroom. He sets aside one day a week for his confession and a social visit with some clerical friend. He attends the various gatherings of the clergy of his deanery and diocese, and pays an occasional visit to his family. He thus finds ample recreation to maintain his health and vigor without exposing himself to the danger of dissipating his energies or of neglecting his own spiritual welfare or the wants of his parishioners.

It is true that a pastor must identify himself with his flock to make his influence felt among the members. As he is separated from the laity by the Lord, like Paul and Barnabas, however, he cannot lead in their social life, or find congenial recreation in their pastimes. He can identify himself intimately with them and find both recreation and an incentive to study by developing a

[17]Eccli. 6, 17.

hobby that will prove beneficial to their material interests. Thus, a rural pastor will rise in the esteem and affection of his people in proportion as he takes an interest in their material affairs, and, in addition to ministering to the spiritual wants of all is able to make helpful suggestions to improve the material condition of his less progressive parishioners. And a city pastor who proves himself an expert on sociological questions will preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a more sympathetic congregation than another who is not in touch with his people, because he neglects to study the difficulties that constitute the burden of their daily life. The people will consider the former their personal friend and benefactor, but the latter they may regard as a hireling. And of the two the former finds diversion and new interest in life by thus directing his superfluous energy, while the latter finds his life monotonous and his people unsympathetic.

5. THE CITIZEN.

Jesus Christ.

Though He was above the law Jesus Christ obeyed both the Mosaic law and the civil law of the Romans. He realized that "there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God,"[1] and so submitted to the laws as the manifestation of His Father's will. He came to be a Model of every virtue and did not forget the spiritual nature of His mission by taking an active part in politics or by identifying Himself with any faction. He was so devoted to its observance that He declared that "one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled."[2]

Jesus Christ not only taught man to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's"[3] but on one occasion went to the extreme of performing a miracle to provide the means of paying His taxes. The tax-gatherer of Capharnaum met Peter one day and asked: "Doth not your Master pay the didrachmas? He said: Yes. And when he was come into the house Jesus prevented him, saying: What is thy opinion, Simon? The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute or custom? of their own children, or of strangers? And he said: Of strangers. Jesus said to him: Then the children are free. But that we may not scandalize them, go to the sea, and cast in a hook:

[1]Rom. 13, 1. [2]Matt. 5, 18. [3]Mark 12, 17.

and that fish which shall first come up, take: and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a stater: take that, and give it to them for Me and thee."[4]

Not content with rendering "to all men their dues,"[5] Jesus manifested His charity by seeking to relieve the material wants of His countrymen. The alms He received from the rich He distributed among the poor and frequently had recourse to His divine power to manifest His compassion for the multitude. He bore testimony to these charitable deeds when He replied to the messengers of John the Baptist: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them."[6]

The severest trials which Jesus had to endure were prepared for Him by the very people He loved and benefited. In their narrowmindedness and selfishness they could not understand His magnanimity and devotion. Instead of acknowledging Jesus as the Messias the Jews were scandalized at His pretensions and turned a deaf ear to His argument: "Though you will not believe Me, believe the works."[7] He met their unjust suspicions with kind forbearance, their insulting accusations with dignified vindication, and their violence with absolute conformity to the will of His heavenly Father, who used their blind passion to effect the redemption of mankind. And

[4]Matt. 17, 23-26. [5]Rom. 13, 7. [6]Matt. 11, 4-5.
[7]John 10, 38.

though His enemies brought Him to the death of the cross they could not quench the love which Jesus bore them, for with His dying breath He pleaded for them and said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[8]

The Priest.

To be esteemed as the representative of Jesus Christ it does not suffice for the priest to be devoted to his flock. "He must have a good testimony of them who are without: lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."[9] He can win the good will of individuals by cultivating their personal friendship, but to enjoy the esteem of his community he must excel in the virtues that make a good citizen. He must be patriotic without being partisan, public spirited without posing as a reformer, neighborly without being meddlesome, just without being miserly, and charitable without being Pharisaical.

The priest can champion only the cause of Jesus Christ. While admitting the upright intentions of all political parties the priest should hold himself aloof from mere party politics. He should be a patriot in the truest sense of the word by wisely promoting the interests of his country, while bewaring of becoming the tool of selfish politicians. Like every true patriot the priest manifests his love for his country by lending his influence to the enactment and enforcement of wise and just laws, by advocating respect for authority in the concrete, and by promoting the

[8] Luke 23, 34. [9] I. Tim. 3, 7.

observance of law and order through the influence of his example no less than by his eloquence. As a true patriot he should respect the national heroes, celebrate the national holidays, and make those personal sacrifices for his country's sake which circumstances may demand.

Though the priest should labor primarily to make his flock intelligent and devout Catholics, he should take an interest in questions affecting the social and material welfare of his community. He should do his utmost to have social affairs adjusted according to the principles of Jesus Christ, and give his hearty support to needed public improvements. While supporting the enforcement of wise and just ordinances, the priest should beware, however, of giving his support to such measures as would arbitrarily curtail the rights and liberties of his fellow citizens, or of such impractical measures as are sometimes promoted by shortsighted and selfish individuals.

There are three qualities in particular that will cause the priest to be esteemed as a man in his community. They are honesty, veracity, and charity. These social virtues establish him in peace with his neighbors and qualify him in their estimation to speak in the name of God. Honesty demands that the priest will live within his means and pay his bills promptly. He will have no difficulty in doing this if he seeks to live the simple life of his Master. And as extravagance is one of the vices of modern times he should seek to

combat it by the influence of his example. Then, the priest must consider truth as sacred, and his word as binding in honor as well as in conscience. "Let your speech be yea, yea: no, no:" exhorts the Savior, "and that which is over and above these, is of evil,"[10] To preach The Truth with authority the priest must speak and live the truth. He should, therefore, beware of making a statement lightly, especially if it may prove detrimental to any one's reputation. He should likewise weigh matters carefully before he gives his word or makes a promise, but when he has once made a promise or an appointment he should redeem it even at the cost of much personal inconvenience and sacrifice. Finally, without the charity of Jesus Christ the priest becomes "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."[11] He is expected to be fairminded and warm hearted to mediate between God and man, and to give evidence of his love for God by the charity he practises in word and deed towards his fellowmen.

Though more is expected of him than from an ordinary citizen the priest should not be vindictive as long as the welfare of religion is not jeopardized by silence. He should have compassion on the multitude and be prepared to suffer many things to be made conformable to his divine Model. "For if in the green wood they do these things," asked the Master while carrying His cross to Calvary, "what shall be done in the dry?"[12] Let the priest, therefore, do all in his power to enlighten the ignorant and to preserve his good

[10]Matt. 5, 37. [11]I. Cor. 13, 1. [12]Luke 23, 31.

name by a spotless life rather than run the risk of alienating the affections of the better members of the community by personal vindictiveness. The antagonism between the powers of darkness and the interests of Jesus Christ is definite and lasting and is easily fanned into open hostility. In proportion as the priest is dead to all personal interests, is he enabled to champion the cause of his Master with all his strength. Religion will always gain from bigotry and persecutions that are stirred up by the enemies of the Church. And if the priest is made to "suffer persecution for justice' sake,"[13] he should pray for his enemies and rejoice with the Apostles that he was "accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."[14]

[13]Matt. 5, 10. [14]Acts 5, 41.

6. CHRISTUS ET ALTER CHRISTUS.

Jesus Christ.

"Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end."[1] Jesus Christ loved His Apostles unreservedly, with all the ardor of His Sacred Heart. He manifested His predilection for them by selecting them to continue His mission of peace to men of good will, by patiently educating them for their sublime vocation, by humbly washing their feet, by giving Himself to them in the Sacrament of His love, by investing them with His own divine authority, and by giving them the special protection of His Providence in their labors and trials. "I will not now call you servants:" He said to them, "for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends: because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you. You have not chosen Me: but I have chosen you; and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit; and your fruit should remain."[2]

Jesus Christ cherishes the bishops and priests of His Church with the same love that He manifested towards His Apostles. To them He can not only say: "You have not chosen Me: but I have chosen you; and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit,"[2] but He gives them the same divine assistance that they

[1]John 13, 1. [2]John 15, 15-16.

may abide in Him and He in them. In them and through them Jesus Christ verifies and fulfils the promise He made to the Apostles: "And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world,"[3] for in them and through them He continues, perpetuates, and consummates His work as Mediator between God and man.

Jesus Christ manifests His love for His priests by entrusting His revealed truth to their keeping. Before He commissioned them to teach all nations to observe whatsoever He had commanded,[4] He separated them from the world, like Saul and Barnabas of old, and prepared them by the guidance of His representatives and the enlightenment of His grace to assume the responsibilities of this office. He enables them to teach in a worthy manner by imparting to them the plentitude of the Holy Spirit in Holy Orders, and by cooperating with them by the light of His grace and the guidance of His providence. In proportion, therefore, as His priests seek to preach Christ crucified by word and example will the Spirit of God give unction to their words and inspire souls to follow their guidance. St. Paul recognized this fact when he wrote to his disciple Timothy and said: "Thou, O man of God, pursue justice, godliness, faith, charity, patience, mildness. Fight the good fight of faith: lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called. Keep the commandment without spot, blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."[5]

[3]Matt. 28, 20. [4]Matt. 28, 20. [5]I. Tim. 6, 11-14.

In the second place Jesus Christ manifests His predilection for His priests by entrusting the keys of the kingdom of heaven to them and making them the dispensers of His merits. He still has compassion on the multitude and will suffer none of good will to grow faint and fall by the wayside of life. As He fed the multitude miraculously in the desert through the ministry of His Apostles so He now desires to nourish mankind spiritually through the ministry of His priests. Through them He begets the faithful in the spiritual life, unites them to Himself by the bonds of divine friendship, cures them of the disease of sin, and enables them to live, to die, and to reign with Him. In the solicitude of His love He, therefore, exhorts His priest to be actuated by His spirit, saying: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking care of it, not by constraint, but willingly, according to God: not for filthy lucre's sake, but voluntarily: being made a pattern of the flock from the heart."[6]

In the third place Jesus Christ gives His priests a token of His special love for them by entrusting Himself to them in the Sacrament of His Love, even as He entrusted Himself physically to the care of His Immaculate Mother. "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you,"[7] He says to them with the same affection with which He first addressed these words to His Apostles. In the Blessed Sacrament Jesus Christ abides with His priests as their devoted Friend. By faith they can hear Him speaking from the altar: "Behold

[6] I. Peter 5, 2-3. [7] Luke 22, 15.

I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."[8] Here He resides as their eternal Highpriest "always living to make intercession for us."[9] Here He prays to His heavenly Father even as He prayed after the Last Supper: "And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent Me."[10]

In the fourth place Jesus Christ manifests His love for His priests by cooperating intimately in their labors, by sustaining them in their trials, and by crowning their humble efforts with success. As He confirmed the word of the Apostles "with signs that followed,"[11] so Jesus Christ cooperates in the labors of His priests and renders their efforts effective. "I have planted," says St. Paul, "Apollo watered, but God gave the increase."[12] Before the Holy Spirit descended upon them the Apostles were timid, weak, and irresolute, but afterwards they preached Christ crucified fearlessly, generously made every sacrifice, and reaped an abundant harvest of souls. Without the special protection of Providence and the unerring assistance of grace the priest might well despair, but as Christ is ever ready to sustain him and to crown his efforts with success he may confidently say with St. Paul: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me."[13] The evidence of the Master's cooperation appears particularly in the labors

[8]Matt. 28, 20. [9]Hebr. 7, 25. [10]John 17, 20-21.
[11]Mark 16, 20. [12]I. Cor. 3, 6. [13]Phil. 4, 13.

of those priests who excel in sincerity, simplicity, purity, and generosity, and who invite it by a childlike devotion to Jesus and Mary.

Finally, Jesus Christ manifests His love for His priests by the compassion He feels for them in their trials, by the indulgence with which He overlooks their defects, and by the mercy with which He pardons their faults. He Himself wished to suffer deprived of all consolation that He might merit to sympathize with man in his trials and console him in affliction. Now, as the trials of the priest are in a special manner the trials of Jesus Christ, the priest is never more intimately united to his divine Master than when united to Him by the Communion of the Cross. Besides, the patience and indulgence of the Master towards His Apostles should inspire the priest with hope and confidence when the consciousness of his own weakness and imperfections tempts him to diffidence and despondency. And even though his conscience convict him of sin, let the priest never despair of the mercy of that good Master who washed the traitor's feet, and looked with loving forgiveness upon the Apostle that thrice denied Him. For, though it is true that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required,"[14] it is equally true that more is overlooked in a friend and in a member of the family than in a stranger or in a servant, that the priest who ministers the mercy of God to others will ever find the Sacred Heart of Jesus a safe refuge himself, and that,

[14] Luke 12, 48.

in proportion as he works to promote the kingdom of God on earth, will he also have a special claim on the grace and mercy necessary for him to triumph over the flesh, the world, and the devil, and live in daily union with his divine Master.

The Priest.

In proportion as the priest reciprocates the love of Jesus Christ will it produce a sixfold effect in his daily life. In the first place it weans him from the pleasures of the world and the gratification of self-love and unites him intimately with his divine Master. Instead of heedlessly exposing himself to the occasion of sin or of giving scandal it makes him resolute in time of temptation and enables him to live in the presence of Jesus by faith, to make the glory of God and the welfare of souls the object of his daily life, and to regulate his thoughts, desires, words and actions according to the example of his divine Model and the holy will of God. Viewing all things from the divine perspective he cherishes God above all, loves all that is acceptable in His sight, and detests all that displeases Him. With the Spouse in the Canticles he can exclaim: "I found Him whom my soul loveth."[15]

In the second place this mutual friendship centers the priest's affection more and more on Jesus and Mary so that he can say to Them as St. Paul wrote to his beloved disciples: "I have you in my heart."[16] Not content with a general idea of the personality and labors of Jesus Christ it

[15]Cant. 3, 4. [16]Phil. 1, 7.

prompts him to study His life in detail, to meditate on His words and actions, to rejoice in His triumphs, to sympathize with Him in His trials, and to thank Him for His goodness, love, and mercy to mankind. This love gives unction to the priest's sermons. It inspires him with recollection and fervor in conducting the liturgical functions of the Church as well as in performing his own private devotions. During the busy hours of the day, especially in trials and difficulties, it turns his mind and heart to the hallowed precincts of the sanctuary where Jesus dwells, and often allures him to linger in the Master's presence, to plan, to consult, and to beg assistance from Him in spreading His kingdom on earth and making His love reign in the hearts of men.

When he meditates on the boundless love of Jesus Christ as centered on himself personally the priest feels his utter worthlessness as did St. Peter when he exclaimed: "Lord, Thou shalt never wash my feet."[17] And instead of reclining on his Master's breast like the beloved disciple he could more naturally exclaim with Simon Peter: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."[18] But to whom shall he go? In proportion as he realizes his utter helplessness on the one hand, and is enlightened to understand the benevolent love of Jesus Christ on the other hand, he sighs with the publican: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner"[19] till he feels a hidden joy and spiritual sweetness in his soul that seems to transport him to Tabor's heights. With St. Peter he can then exclaim:

[17]John 13, 8. [18]Luke 5, 8. [19]Luke 18, 13.

"Lord, it is good for us to be here."[20] With his whole heart and soul he then thanks Jesus for His predilection in choosing him for His anointed, and if he had a thousand lives he would gladly consecrate them all to the service of so good a Master.

The priest's love for Jesus and Mary inspires him with that zeal in promoting Their interest which prompted the Royal Prophet to exclaim: "The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up."[21] He is thrilled as he beholds in spirit how his Master defends the sanctity of the temple in Jerusalem against the encroachment of the buyers and sellers. But he is saddened as he turns to his own little church where Jesus finds His delights in dwelling among the children of men, if he sees it neglected and uninviting as the stable of Bethlehem, and exerts himself to make it as neat and beautiful as circumstances will permit. As he meditates on the great work of the Atonement the priest is filled with a horror for sin that strengthens his resolution to live in close union with his divine Master and fills him with the solicitude and compassion of the Good Shepherd for the members of his own flock. Like St. Paul he may be willing to become an anathema from Christ, for his brethren,[22] but, as God wishes the santification of both priests and people, he seeks to render himself a fit instrument in the hands of God for the sanctification of the souls whom Providence has entrusted to his care. The coldness of the world cannot chill his zeal nor the ingratitude of

[20]Matt. 17, 4. [21]Ps. 68, 10. [22]Rom. 9, 3.

the world destroy it, for, as long as the priest looks for appreciation and sympathy to Jesus Christ, he can be indifferent to earthly esteem and encouragement. He is thus prepared to go before his flock, to labor faithfully, to endure meekly, and to lay down his life if need be to save a lost sheep of his beloved Master.

When the priest experiences the presence of Jesus Christ by the thrilling light and quickening warmth of His grace he can understand the exclamation of the disciples at Emmaus: "Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke?"[23] And though he can not understand the mysteries of His love, nor the wondrous ways of Providence, he instinctively knows that the Master is true, and good, and faithful. Instead of being weighed down with his own sorrows, like the disciples in Gethsemani, he affectionately sympathizes with Jesus Christ in the wrong that is done Him by the insincerity, the coldness, and the ingratitude of mankind. He humbly begs pardon for his own sins, and seeks to extenuate the guilt of mankind by reminding Jesus of His prayer upon the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[24] But as he cannot prevent all sin nor explain away all the malice of mankind, he exclaims with a mother's solicitude for her wayward children: "O Lord, spare Thy people: and give not Thy inheritance to reproach,"[25] "because Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, in Thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation."[26]

[23]Luke 24, 32. [24]Luke 23, 34. [25]Joel 2, 17.
[26]Apoc. 5, 9.

Finally, in proportion as the priest reciprocates the love of Jesus Christ is he also filled with his Master's compassion for mankind, and identifies himself with His divine mission. Instead of being actuated by the haughtiness and cynicism of the world he meets his neighbor with the meekness and cordiality of the Savior, hesitates at no personal sacrifice to promote his welfare, and is willing to lay down his own life to blot out the sins that wound the Sacred Heart and prevent the grace of God from inflaming the hearts of men with love for God. Thus, the glory of God, the spread of Christ's kingdom, the welfare of the Church, and the sanctification of souls become the object of his life. The fire of divine charity prompts his actions and conforms them to the example of his divine Model and the holy will of God. Such a priest may not only say with St. Paul: "The charity of Christ presseth us,"[27] but also: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh: I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself for me."[28]

[27] II. Cor. 5, 14. [28] Gal. 2. 20.

7. THE MEDIATOR IN DEATH.

Jesus Christ.

Having assumed the integrity of human nature Jesus Christ was immune from death arising from sickness or old age. If He was to lay down His life for the redemption of mankind death had to be inflicted upon Him through external violence. And as sin made man an enemy of God it was decreed in the councils of the Almighty that Jesus Christ should make atonement for sin by accepting death at the hands of His enemies. He consented to surrender Himself into their hands at the appointed time when He said: "Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will: O my God, I have desired it, and Thy law is in the midst of My heart."[1] Though Jesus Christ was most solicitous to do the will of His heavenly Father in all things He called the conforming to the divine will in the house of death His hour by predilection. He looked forward tc it with fond anticipation because it afforded Him the opportunity of making superabundant satisfaction to His heavenly Father for the sins of the world, and of sealing His love for mankind with His blood upon the cross.

From the moment of His Incarnation Jesus Christ directed the details of His life according to the will of His heavenly Father until it culminated in His death upon the cross. On His part

[1]Ps. 39, 8-9.

the heavenly Father provided that Herod should not frustrate this plan, and that the enemies of Jesus should not lay hands on Him during His public life "because His hour was not yet come."[2] Seeking only the accomplishment of the divine will Jesus entered on the labors, trials, and pleasures of life with equal equanimity and concentration. Hence, He was as much at home at Bethlehem, at Nazareth, and even on Calvary, as on Tabor, or during His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Being indifferent to all but the holy will of God He labored diligently when it was time to labor, suffered in patience and resignation when overwhelmed with humiliation and injury, and prayed with recollection and devotion when it was time for prayer. By doing the will of His heavenly Father in the living present Jesus Christ thus made His remote preparation for death.

The proximate preparation for death Jesus made by providing for the welfare of His disciples. "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end."[3] To impress the necessity of humility indelibly upon their minds and hearts He humbly prostrated Himself before them and washed their feet. He said He would not leave them orphans.[4] In that solemn hour of leave-taking He, therefore, gave Himself to them in the Sacrament of His love, the most precious keepsake that God could give to man. He then made the practice of fraternal charity the test of their fidelity to Him, saying: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another,

[2]John 7, 30. [3]John 13, 1. [4]John 14, 18.

as I have loved you.''[5] Having exhorted them to the practice of fraternal charity He assured them that both He and His heavenly Father would give them whatever they would ask in His name. He then promised them the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit in their sublime mission and concluded His touching discourse by praying to His heavenly Father that His disciples might persevere in concord and charity on earth and share with Him the reward of heaven. Finally, while hanging on the cross amid the gloom of Calvary Jesus Christ entrusted all His disciples in the person of St. John to the tender care of His own Mother, and exhorted them to practise a childlike devotion to her. ''Woman,'' He said, ''behold thy son. After that He said to the disciple: Behold thy mother.''[6] Having consummated His work Jesus cried out with a loud voice: ''Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit''[7] and died.

The Priest.

Man inherits death as the penalty of original sin. ''By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death;'' says St. Paul, ''and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned.''[8] In proportion as man lives ensnared by the flesh, the world, and the devil, will he find death terrible. During life he may make a compromise with his conscience or gag it into submission. But he can not escape the all-seeing eye of God during life, nor hide himself from His messenger death when he will come to summon him to judgment. ''It is

[5]John 13, 34. [6]John 19, 26-27. [7]Luke 23, 46.
[8]Rom. 5, 12.

appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment."[9] "The death of the wicked is very evil."[10] It puts an end to their self-deification. It despoils them of the honors, riches, and pleasures of the world. It ushers them into eternity, into the presence of an outraged judge, and "in the twinkling of an eye"[11] into the torments of the reprobate.

When Solomon reviewed his misspent life before he died he exclaimed in the bitterness of his heart: "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity."[12] When the wicked in hell review their misspent lives they exclaim: "We have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us. We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and as a ship that passeth through the waves: whereof when it is gone by, the trace can not be found, nor the path of its keel in the waters. So we also being born, forthwith ceased to be: and have been able to show no mark of virtue: but are consumed in our wickedness."[13]

When he first yielded to the promptings of grace the priest began his remote preparation for death. By habitually cooperating with grace he triumphed over the flesh before his passions could enslave

[9]Hebr. 9, 27. [10]Ps. 33, 22. [11]I. Cor. 15, 52.
[12]Eccles. 1, 2. [13]Wis. 5, 6-13.

him. He renounced the world when he put on the clerical dress and said with the Psalmist: "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup: it is Thou that wilt restore my inheritance to me."[14] And he became a standard bearer of Jesus Christ and a sworn enemy of the powers of darkness when he was made a mediator between his fellowmen and God on the day of his ordination. As he knelt in the sanctuary on that memorable day the Master spoke to him and said: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."[15] "Behold I send you as lambs among wolves."[16] "Be ye wise as serpents and simple as doves."[17] "Fear not, for I am with thee."[18] "I am thy protector, and thy reward exceeding great."[19] "The disciple is not above the Master, nor the servant above his Lord."[20] "Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake."[21] "Have confidence, I have overcome the world."[22] "And behold I am with you all days."[23] "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."[24]

When the young Levite looked forward from the hallowed precincts of the seminary to the active labors of the ministry he took it for granted that he would do great things in the service of his Master. Experience soon taught him, however, that the violence of the undercurrent of life caused

[14]Ps. 15, 5. [15]Apoc. 3, 11. [16]Luke 10, 3.
[17]Matt. 10, 16. [18]Is. 43, 5. [19]Gen. 15, 1.
[20]Matt. 10, 24. [21]Luke 6, 22. [22]John 16, 33.
[23]Matt. 28, 20. [24]Matt. 5, 12.

by "the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life"[25] constantly threatened him with spiritual shipwreck, and that instead of heroic deeds the Lord required him to "watch and pray,"[26] lest he fall into temptation while performing the commonplace duties of the sacred ministry. In proportion as the priest mediates day after day between God and man with purity of intention, generosity of disposition, and fidelity in action, is he also following the example of his divine Master, and making his remote preparation for death in a worthy manner. By this fidelity in his daily labors, trials, and devotions, the priest also contributes his share to "fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, for His body, which is the Church."[27] For, as Jesus Christ saved mankind by His cross, so the priest applies the Savior's merits to individual souls by his personal sacrifice and patient endurance of the cross. Let him, therefore, be on his guard lest his pride, his self-love, or his self-will vitiate his actions in the sight of God by prompting him to flee from the cross that Providence lays upon his shoulders. With St. Paul he should rather glory in this cross as the measure of his conformity to Jesus Christ. By telling us to bear our daily cross[28] the Savior teaches us to live in the present, to forget the trials that are past, and to leave the future to God's loving providence. The present is the acceptable time, the day of salvation.[29] He uses the present tense when He says: "My yoke is sweet and My burden

[25] I. John 2, 16. [26] Matt. 26, 41. [27] Col. 1, 24.
[28] Matt. 16, 24. [29] II. Cor. 6, 2.

light.''[30] As long, therefore, as the priest mistrusts himself in the present, and trusts in the protection of Providence, in the effectual cooperation of Jesus Christ, and in the perpetual help of Mary in the present, will he avoid evil and do the good that the holy will of God requires of him as a remote preparation for death.

In his proximate preparation for death the priest disposes of his temporal possessions and makes his immediate preparations to render an account of his stewardship to Jesus Christ. During his public ministry he had frequent occasion to urge upon the laity the necessity of making this preparation in ample time. If he wishes his practice to agree with his preaching, and not to scandalize the laity in death, the priest must pay particular attention to these words of the Savior: ''Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands. And you yourselves like to men who wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh, shall find watching. Amen I say to you, that he will gird himself, and made them sit down to meat, and passing will minister unto them. Be you then also ready: for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come.''[31]

Though it is the duty of every man to make reasonable provision for himself and those dependent on him, a priest would be in danger of

[30]Matt. 11, 30. [31]Luke 12, 35-40.

giving positive scandal by dying rich. For, on the one hand, the possession of riches is foreign to the life of his divine Model, who had not where to lay His head,[32] and on the other hand material wealth should not be treasured inordinately, but used for the benefit of mankind. Besides, as the acquisition of wealth can be but a by-product of a normal, priestly life, the possession of wealth would be an indication that the priest had either neglected his sacred duties in accumulating it, or omitted to perform the works of zeal and mercy that the circumstances of his life demanded of him. Hence, if Jesus Christ says of the man of the world that "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven,"[33] the public will have reason to condemn that priest as a miser who dies rich. Every priest should do the good he can during life. If his near relatives, who made sacrifices for him, are in need, he should render them timely assistance during life rather than defer the payment of this debt of gratitude to the hour of death. Though he should make his will while he is in good health, the priest can avoid unfavorable criticism after death by arranging his earthly affairs during life that his testament will mention only such bequests as are in harmony with his priestly calling. And the public expects that the little he accumulated while serving the Lord, should be bequeathed to the service of the Lord.

In proportion as the priest has conformed to the example of his divine Model in living an hum-

[32]Matt. 8, 20. [33]Matt. 19, 24.

ble, devout life, will he be able to call death his friend and the hour of death the time of his final triumph. For he may exclaim: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"[34] Unlike his divine Master the priest does not know when that hour will come, but like Him he has then prepared himself in the present, so that when death comes it cannot rob him of anything dear to his heart. When he meditates on death he beholds the risen Savior beyond its shadows saying to him: "Be thou faithful until death: and I will give thee the crown of life,"[35] and a longing for eternal rest, for perpetual light, and for the unending joys of heaven fills his heart. And yet, even though the solitude of his life at times weighs upon him, even though the people for whom he spent his daily life treat him with coldness and mistrust, yes, even though his friends and superiors misjudge him, he is ready to continue to labor and to endure as long as it is God's holy will. Having acquired some knowledge of the value of suffering he welcomes sickness as a visitation from heaven and ever finds his solace and security in uniting himself to Jesus Christ by means of the Communion of the Cross.

Even though the priest has not been faithful in all things he has implicit confidence in the mercy and the merits of Him who said to the repentant thief upon the cross: "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise."[36] And the childlike devotion which he ever cherished for

[34] I. Cor. 15, 54-55. [35] Apoc. 2, 10. [36] Luke 23, 43.

her who "stood by the cross of Jesus,"[37] and which he ever strove to instil into the hearts of his spiritual children, gives him an indescribable assurance and consolation when death is liberating his soul from its prison of clay. Instead of giving disedification by impatience he repeats the protestation of his Master in the garden of Gethsemani: "Not My will, but Thine be done."[38] And even when the faithful priest must face death alone, deprived of the consolations of religion which he has administered to so many others, he does not lose hope. Realizing that he is literally made conformable to his divine Master, who died apparently abandoned by God and man, he communes with God in silent acts of humility, faith, hope, love, and contrition, and in union with Jesus on the cross says, as his end draws nigh: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."[39]

[37]John 19, 25. [38]Luke 22, 42. [39]Luke 23, 46.

RECOMPENSE OF THE MEDIATOR.

EPILOGUE—THE RECOMPENSE OF THE MEDIATOR.

Jesus Christ.

Even as a child Jesus Christ received greater homage than was ever paid to any earthly monarch. At His birth angels surprised the shepherds on the neighboring hills and summoned them to adore their new-born Savior. "Fear not," one angel said, "for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for, this day, is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." And after he had given them minute directions a chorus of heavenly spirits intoned a hymn of praise and cheer that has infused hope and love into the hearts of succeeding generations as it has reechoed throughout the world with the lapse of time. "Glory to God in the highest;" they sang, "and on earth peace to men of good will."[1] "And after eight days were accomplished, His name was called Jesus, which He was called by the angel before He was conceived."[2]

At that time "there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was in him. And he had received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came by the Spirit into the temple,

[1]Luke 2, 10-14. [2]Luke 2, 21.

when His parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law. Taking the child into his arms Simeon blessed God, saying: Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace: because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people. And when His father and mother were wondering at these things which were spoken concerning Him Simeon said to Mary His Mother: Behold, this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel. And Anna, a prophetess, coming in confessed to the Lord; and spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel.'"[3]

"When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of king Herod, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying: Where is He that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to adore Him. Who having heard the king, went their way; and behold the star which they had seen in the east, went before them, and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering in they found the child with Mary His Mother, and falling down they adored Him; and opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.'"[4]

"And after they were departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, saying: Arise,

[3]Luke 2, 25-38. [4]Matt. 2, 1-11.

and take the child and His Mother and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy Him. Who arose and took the child and His Mother by night, and retired into Egypt: and he was there until the death of Herod: That it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Out of Egypt have I called My Son."[5]

"And the child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom; and the grace of God was in Him. And His parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the pasch. And when He was twelve years old the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and His parents knew it not. And thinking that He was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass, that, after three days, they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers."[6]

Though He encountered the bitterest hostility Jesus Christ likewise received the highest honor during His public life. In the first place He was singularly honored by God. For at His baptism "it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also being baptized and praying, heaven was opened; and the Holy Ghost descended

[5]Matt. 2, 13-15. [6]Luke 2, 40-47.

in a bodily shape, as a dove upon Him; and a voice came from heaven: Thou art My beloved Son: in Thee I am well pleased.''[7] During His transfiguration on Tabor He was likewise honored by God when a voice from heaven spoke to His disciples and said: ''This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.''[8] Finally, after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem when Jesus prayed in the presence of the Gentile inquirers: ''Father, glorify Thy name,'' His Father replied: ''I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.''[9]

In the second place Jesus Christ was honored by the spirit world. In His temptation in the desert Jesus thrice vanquished the devil and put him to flight, after which ''angels came and ministered to Him.''[10] The first time He preached in the synagogue of Capharnaum a man with an unclean spirit was present and cried out: ''What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know who Thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus threatened him, saying: Speak no more, and go out of the man. And the unclean spirit went out of him.''[11] On another occasion Jesus passed over the sea to the country of the Gerasens where He met two men possessed by a legion of evil spirits. Recognizing His authority and power they cried out: ''What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was, not far from them, a herd of many

[7]Luke 3, 21-22. [8]Matt. 17, 5. [9]John 12, 28.
[10]Matt. 4, 11. [11]Mark 1, 24-26.

swine feeding. And the devils besought Him, saying: If Thou cast us out hence, send us into the herd of swine. And He said to them: Go."[12]

This power which Jesus exercised over the powers of darkness as well as over the laws of nature He also delegated to His Apostles when He sent them to convert the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "Heal the sick," He said to them, "raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out devils: freely have you received, freely give."[13] Finally, when all human sympathy was denied Him and the powers of hell sought to crush Jesus Christ in the garden of Gethsemani "there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him."[14]

In the third place Jesus Christ was highly honored by mankind. Whenever He preached "the people were in admiration at His doctrine. For He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees."[15] And still He demanded more of them than any teacher had ever asked of his followers. "If any man will come after Me," He said, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."[16] And, "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another."[17] But in spite of these demands the multitude "followed Him on foot out of the cities,"[18] so that Jesus had compassion on them because they continued with Him for three days without having anything to eat; and rather than see them faint

[12]Matt. 8, 29.
[13]Matt. 10, 8.
[14]Luke 22, 43.
[15]Matt. 7, 28-29.
[16]Luke 9, 23.
[17]John 13, 35.
[18]Matt. 14, 13.

by the wayside He fed them miraculously in the desert. The first Christians observed these injunctions of the Master so implicitly that they "had but one heart and one soul: neither did anyone say that aught of the things which he possessed, was his own; but all things were common unto them."[19] Though faith has grown cold in many hearts the observance of these two precepts of the Master is still cherished after the lapse of many centuries, and will ever be indicative of the True Church and of His genuine disciples.

Next to His own Mother, however, the Apostles showed Jesus the greatest homage and devotion. "Walking by the sea of Galilee, Jesus saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea. And He saith to them: Come ye after Me, and I will make you to be fishers of men. And they immediately leaving their nets, followed Him. And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and He called them. And they forthwith left their nets and father, and followed Him."[20] At Cesarea Philippi Jesus asked His Apostles: "Whom do you say that I am? and Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."[21] When many of His disciples withdrew from Him at Capharnaum and walked with Him no more because He had told them that He would give them His flesh to eat and His blood to drink, "Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also

[19]Acts 4, 32. [20]Matt. 4, 18-22. [21]Matt. 16, 15-16.

go away? And Simon Peter answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known, that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.''[22] And when Jesus expressed His intention of visiting Lazarus and exposing Himself anew to the fury of His enemies ''Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples: Let us also go, that we may die with Him.''[23]

When Jesus was apprehended by His enemies His disciples fled as the prophet Zacharias had foretold: ''I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed.''[24] However, they gathered around their Master again as soon as He had risen from the dead. But when they were once enlightened and strengthened by the Holy Ghost they set out on their mission with a holy enthusiasm, zealously preached the Gospel everywhere, and rejoiced when ''they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus,''[25] until they were privileged to lay down their lives for love of Him. The Apostles handed down their spirit to their successors, and the Holy Ghost has continued to cooperate with them to the present day. As we look back over the centuries that have rolled by we find that perhaps twenty-five millions of men, women, and children have followed the example of the Apostles by shedding their blood for love of Jesus Christ, that many other millions have consecrated their lives to the Master in works of zeal and mercy, and that

[22]John 6, 68-70. [23]John 11, 16. [24]Matt. 26, 31.
[25]Acts 5, 41.

countless others have in all ages, lived by charity and taken up their daily cross and followed the divine Model on the narrow way to life eternal.

Even nature paid its homage to Jesus Christ, as many instances in the Gospels testify. For example: "It came to pass on a certain day that He went into a little ship with His disciples, and He said to them: let us go over to the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. And when they were sailing, He slept; and there came down a storm of wind upon the lake, and they were filled, and were in danger. And they came and awaked Him, saying: Master, we perish. But he arising, rebuked the wind and the rage of the water; and it ceased, and there was a calm."[26] At the marriage in Cana Mary observed that the supply of wine had given out and informed her Son. Jesus said to the waiters: "Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, he calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now."[27] On two occasions while preaching in the desert Jesus multiplied a few loaves and fishes till they sufficed to satiate thousands of people. On another occasion the Apostles had fished all night but had caught nothing. At the word of Jesus, however, their

[26]Luke 8, 22-24. [27]John 2, 7-10.

nets were so filled with fish that they threatened to sink their boats. All manner of human infirmity and even death acknowledged His authority, so that Jesus simply referred to the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaias when the disciples of John came to inquire whether He were the Christ. "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen," He replied. "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead rise again."[28] Finally, when Jesus Christ freely laid down His life for the redemption of mankind all nature mourned, "the sun was darkened,"[29] "the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose, and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many."[30]

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was as triumphant as His death was ignominious. Imagine the consternation of His enemies when "the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all things that had been done,"[31] and the rejoicing of His disciples when they received the angel's message. "Fear not you," he said; "for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come, and see the place where the Lord was laid."[32] His ascension into heaven was as glorious as His birth was humble. Having repeatedly appeared to His disciples during forty days He finally "led them out as far as Bethania: and lifting up His hands, He

[28]Matt. 11, 4-5. [29]Luke 23, 45. [30]Matt. 27, 51-53.
[31]Matt. 28, 11. [32]Matt. 28, 5-6.

blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He departed from them, and was carried up to heaven."[33] "And while they were beholding Him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments. Who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen Him going into heaven."[34]

Sitting "on the right hand of God"[35] His Father, Jesus Christ is no longer the ignominious King of the Jews, but "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords."[36] "All power is given to Him in heaven and in earth."[37] "He is the head of the body, the Church,"[38] "the true vine"[39] that gives life, health and fecundity to all the branches. He is the Judge and the Witness,[40] "who will render to every man according to his works"[41] at the moment of death. On the last day He will "come in the glory of His Father with His angels"[42] "to judge the living and the dead."[43] "Then shall He sit upon the seat of His majesty: and all nations shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left. Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and

[33] Luke 24, 50-51.
[34] Acts 1, 10-11.
[35] Mark 16, 19.
[36] Apoc. 19, 16.
[37] Matt. 28, 18.
[38] Col. 1, 18.
[39] John 15, 1.
[40] Jer. 29, 23.
[41] Rom. 2, 6.
[42] Matt. 16, 27.
[43] I. Petr. 4, 5.

you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in: naked, and you covered Me: sick, and you visited Me: I was in prison, and you came to Me. Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me. Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand: Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just, into life everlasting."[44] And "time shall be no longer,"[45] but "His power is an everlasting power that shall not be taken away: and His kingdom shall not be destroyed,"[46] for He shall reign forever "and of His kingdom there shall be no end."[47]

The Priest.

God honors a man above all other creatures by choosing him, regardless of his imperfections, to be the mediator between Himself and mankind. When this invitation is accepted with a generous heart God gives the object of His predilection adundant grace to qualify for his vocation and guides him in its attainment by the special protection of His Providence. In Holy Orders God confers upon the priest the right to such a measure of grace and to such particular dispensations of Providence as will make him in truth a living Alter Christus. In proportion to the priest's fidelity in cooperating with them will these accompany him through life, warn him of danger, enlighten,

[44]Matt. 25, 31-46. [45]Apoc. 10, 6. [46]Dan. 7, 14.
[47]Luke 1, 33.

direct, and strengthen him in doing good, quench in him inordinate, selfish desires, and give him a relish for the things that are of Christ. They will enable him to pray devoutly, to labor zealously in the vineyard of the Lord, and to suffer patiently in union with his divine Master in doing the holy will of God. They will speak to him as a voice from heaven said to Jesus Christ at the Jordan: "Thou art My beloved son: in thee I am well pleased,"[48] and they will say to the faithful as the same voice said to the beloved disciples on Mount Tabor: "This is My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him."[49]

In proportion as the priest is mindful of the Master's instructions to His disciples that He is sending them "as lambs among wolves,"[50] and that they should "rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell,"[51] than those who hurt only the body, he will also receive higher homage from man than any earthly ruler has ever received. For the craving of the human heart for happiness inclines the faithful to honor Jesus Christ in their priests, and to revere their spiritual father as their mediator with God, especially if he lives a blameless life himself, and aids them to attain peace of conscience by the practice of solid virtue. Hence in proportion as he strives to be a true priest "according to the order of Melchisedech"[52] will the faithful revere their pastor as "a holy man of God,"[53] submit to his direction with childlike confidence, and make great personal sacri-

[48]Luke 3, 22. [49]Matt. 17, 5. [50]Luke 10, 3.
[51]Matt. 10, 28. [52]Hebr. 7, 17. [53]IV. Kings 4, 9.

fices to second his efforts in their behalf. And when his labors are ended the faithful will mourn over their pastor as orphans might grieve over the loss of a parent. They will hold his memory in benediction and pray for the repose of his soul even when his immediate relatives may have forgotten him.

Jesus Christ honored the priest at the time of his ordination by associating him with Himself in His great work as Mediator between God and man. If since then the priest, like the beloved disciple, took Mary as his own Mother[54] and was devoted to her and her Son, he will have a "reward exceeding great"[55] awaiting him at the moment of death. Up to that time he can associate with them only by faith, hope, and charity, but then he will be privileged to meet them "face to face."[56] Like Saul and Barnabas he is now separated from the world,[57] burdened with the responsibilities of the apostolate, and harassed at times by false friends. Death will end this exile, relieve the priest of his burdens, and admit him to the family of the elect. In the words of the Psalmist it may be said of all devoted priests: "Going they went and wept, casting their seeds. But coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves."[58]

The man of the world fears death because it will rob him of his temporal possessions and usher him before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. The devoted priest, however, turned his back on the

[54]John 19, 27. [55]Gen. 15, 1. [56]I. Cor. 13, 12.
[57]Acts 13, 2. [58]Ps. 125, 6-7.

world when he chose the Lord for his inheritance. Like Abraham he obeyed the Lord when He said: "Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I will show thee,"[59] and according to the promises of the Lord he shall now possess life everlasting.[60] He served generously, and according to the promises of the Master is entitled to a great reward.[61] He was merciful, and entitled to receive mercy.[62] He forgave his enemies, and is entitled to forgiveness.[63] Even though he offended in many things[64] he judged himself that he might not be "condemned with this world."[65] With St. Peter devoted priests may, therefore, ask Jesus Christ: "Behold we have left all things, and have followed Thee: what therefore shall we have?" And Jesus will reply: "Amen, I say to you, that you, who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel."[66] And even though he should be sentenced to purgatory for a while, the priest's entrance into heaven will be hastened by the piety of the faithful on earth, by the gratitude of the souls that he has delivered from this place of purgation, and by his intimate union with Jesus and Mary.

Upon entering the home of the elect the priest receives the crowning grace of the Beatific Vision. This enables him to see God as He is,[67] and in Him

[59]Gen. 12, 1. [60]Matt. 19, 29. [61]Matt. 7, 2.
[62]Matt. 5, 7. [63]Luke 6, 37. [64]James 3, 2.
[65]I. Cor. 11, 32. [66]Matt. 19, 27-28. [67]I. John 3, 2.

to understand all created truths, to "taste and see that the Lord is sweet,"[68] and to find eternal rest in the enjoyment of those pleasures of which St. Paul says "that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."[69] He now understands "that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come,"[70] and if he could have any regret it would be that he had not loved and served Jesus and Mary more faithfully while on earth. But the blessed have no regrets, for "they shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat."[71] "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away."[72]

Thus "the just shall live for evermore: and their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them with the most High,"[73] for Jesus will "give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish for ever."[74] Still, as "star differeth from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead,"[75] when "every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour."[76] "For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done."[77] The priest, therefore, "who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly:

[68]Ps. 33, 9.
[69]I. Cor. 2, 9.
[70]Rom. 8, 18.
[71]Apoc. 7, 16.
[72]Apoc. 21, 4.
[73]Wis. 5, 16.
[74]John 10, 28.
[75]I. Cor. 15, 41-42.
[76]I. Cor. 3, 8.
[77]II. Cor. 5, 10.

and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings."[78] Thus the elect will be satiated with delights according to their capacity.[79] "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house," says the Psalmist, "and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure. For with Thee is the fountain of life; and in Thy light we shall see light."[80]

During life the priest, like the Master in Gethsemani, often craved for sympathy in doing the will of God, and met with indifference, prejudice and opposition. But upon entering heaven he will no longer stand alone. In proportion to the zeal and sacrifice with which he labored to bring souls to Jesus Christ will the number of friends be that will come forth to greet him. The infants that he sent to heaven in their baptismal innocence, the parents that shared with him the burdens of life, the innocent maidens that he espoused to Jesus Christ, the young men whom he directed to the sanctuary, the prodigal sons and daughters of mother Church that he welcomed back, and those other sheep that he received into the true fold, will be joined by countless others whom he has benefited, and will form a triumphal procession and accompany him to his coronation. As he humbly kneels before the thrones of Jesus and Mary to thank them for all their tender mercies, the devoted priest will no longer say with St. Peter: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,"[81] nor with the Centurion: "Lord I am not worthy."[82] He will hear

[78] II. Cor. 9, 6. [79] Ps. 16, 15. [80] Ps. 35, 9-10.
[81] Luke 5, 8. [82] Luke 7, 6.

the Apostles declare him worthy of the crown of the doctorate because he triumphed over the devil and propagated the true faith. He will be welcomed by "a great multitude clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands"[83] because he triumphed over the world and sacrificed his life for the salvation of mankind. And he will be invited by the virgins to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" as a member of their ranks because he was "not defiled with women."[84] Exulting with gratitude the priest confesses with St. Paul: "By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace in me hath not been void."[85] Submitting to the coronation in an ecstasy of delight, he repeats the words of the Magnificat: "My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed,"[86] while the heavenly choirs sing unceasingly: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come."[87]

[83]Apoc. 7, 9. [84]Apoc. 14, 4. [85]I. Cor. 15, 10.
[86]Luke 1, 46-48. [87]Apoc. 4, 8.

—THE END.—

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